

TITLE OF REPORT: Community Safety Board – Strategic Priorities 2023/24
1. Purpose of the Report

1.1 This report provides Housing, Environment and Healthy Communities Overview and Scrutiny Committee with an overview of some of the key activities that have been co-ordinated on behalf of Gateshead Community Safety Board since September 2023 to tackle the strategic priorities outlined within Partnership Plan 2023/24.

1.2 The purpose of the report is to seek the views of the Housing, Environment and Healthy Communities OSC and for members to identify any key issues/areas they wish to scrutinise in detail at a future meeting.

2. Background

2.1 As a reminder, the Community Safety Board is a standalone statutory partnership made up of representatives from Responsible Authorities (including police, local authority, fire and rescue, health, and probation service). These agencies work together to protect local communities from crime and disorder and help people feel safe. The Board’s core statutory functions are to:

- address crime and disorder (including anti-social behaviour and behaviour which adversely affects the environment).
- combat the misuse of drugs, alcohol, and other substances.
- reduce re-offending.
- tackle serious violence.

2.2 The Board also has a statutory duty under Crime and Disorder Act to produce an annual intelligence-led Strategic Assessment (an assessment of need based on data) along with a Partnership Plan (which sets out the priorities and activity that will be undertaken by the Board to address its core statutory functions). A copy of the Partnership Plan 2023/24 has previously been presented to Committee.

2.3 The strategic themes/priorities agreed by Community Safety Board for 2023/24:

STRATEGIC THEME 1: Tackling Serious Violence	STRATEGIC THEME 2: Thriving Communities	STRATEGIC THEME 3: Protecting People from Harm
Serious Violence & Knife Crime Domestic Abuse & VAWG Serious & Organised Crime	Anti-Social Behaviour Locality Working Reducing Re-offending	Hate Crime & Tensions Preventing Radicalisation Combatting Drugs
STRATEGIC THEME 4: Strengthening Governance & Accountability Arrangements		
Community Safety Review	Strategic Assessment	Information Sharing

3 Crime Performance

3.1 The table below shows crime and disorder performance in Gateshead from April through to December 2023:

Offence Type	Current (Apr-Dec23)	Previous (Apr-Dec22)	Change (Vol)	Change (%)
All Crime	14,724	14,129	+595	+4%
Violence against the person - Without injury	3,870	3,521	+349	+10%
Violence against the person - With injury	1,713	1,693	+20	+1%
Violence – Other	125	104	+21	+20%
Sexual offences	517	444	+73	+16%
Theft and handling	2,749	2,629	+120	+5%
Criminal damage	1,990	1,972	+18	+1%
Public disorder	1,457	1,419	+38	+3%
Vehicle crime	965	1,137	-172	-15%
Burglary	765	746	+19	+3%
Drug crime	280	254	+26	+10%
Other	293	210	+83	+40%
Adult-related ASB	3,217	3,111	+106	+3%
Youth-related ASB	1,002	860	+142	+17%
Total ASB	4,219	3,971	+248	+6%
Deliberate Secondary Fires	462	621	-159	-26%

Source: Local Authority LALO Report provided by Northumbria Police Corporate Development Department (Apr-Dec23)

3.2 Recorded crime in Gateshead has increased by 4% (+595 crimes) which is lower than 5% increase experienced across Northumbria. Violent offences continue to account for the highest proportion of crime in Gateshead and increased by 7% on last year. Increases were recorded in most major crime types during this period, with reductions only achieved in vehicle crime. There has been an 26% fall in the number of deliberate secondary fires reported in Gateshead. ASB has risen by 6% (three-quarters of all reported ASB is committed by adults). Youth-related ASB increasing by 17% (+142 incidents).

3.3 The Safer Communities Survey is used to help capture resident perceptions and feelings of safety across Northumbria in relation to crime and disorder. The latest results (covering Apr-Sep23) shows that Gateshead experiences low/poor results for several of the recorded measures compared to Force average – including:

Perception of Neighborhood (Ghd vs (Force))

- 40% (30%) feel their neighbourhood has got worse in the last 12 months.
- 32% (25%) think ASB is a very or fairly big problem in their neighbourhood.
- 30% (35%) think the Police presence in their area is about right.
- 91% (94%) feel very or fairly safe living in their neighbourhood.

Perceptions of Police and Council (Ghd vs (Force))

- 75% (81%) are satisfied with their neighbourhood as a place to live.
- 67% (70%) agree Police can be relied on to sort out problems.
- 62% (69%) think Police do a good or excellent job in their neighbourhood.
- 30% (40%) think Council do a good or excellent job in their neighbourhood.

4 Progress to date

4.1 Each identified priority was allocated a Strategic Lead by Gateshead Community Safety Board to provide strategic oversight and direction and to deliver improved outcomes within their respective priority area. The Strategic Leads have provided the following snapshot of the activities undertaken since the last Housing, Environment and Healthy Communities update in September 2023:

STRATEGIC THEME 1: Tackling Serious Violence

Serious Violence (*Strategic Lead: Steven Hume – Northumbria Violence Reduction Unit*)

- A serious violence needs assessment has been drafted to highlight trends in serious violence over the last three years. A number of recommendations have been put forward to tackle serious violence in Gateshead and will feed into Gateshead's serious violence action plan.
- A serious violence workshop and consultation event was held with Community Safety partners to assist in the drafting of a local serious violence action plan. The action plan has now been drafted and will be submitted to the Home Office for approval.
- Northumbria Police have revised their GRIP hotspots. GRIP hotspots are areas that have been identified as having higher levels of violent crime *outside* of the home, from lower-level Section 39 common assault to serious violence, including murder. There are two areas identified in Gateshead, and these areas are subject to high visibility patrols and problem solving activity to try and reduce levels of violent crime.
- Planning is underway in preparation for a possible Joint Targeted Area Inspection (JTAI) relating to serious youth violence, led by colleagues in Children's Services.

Domestic Abuse (*Strategic Lead: Jill Lax – Northeast and Cumbria Integrated Care Board*)

- Gateshead Local Domestic Abuse Partnership Board (chaired by Chief Executive, Sheena Ramsey) and Gateshead Domestic Abuse Strategy Delivery Group (chaired by ICB Designated Safeguarding Lead for Adults, Jill Lax) have been re-established to progress statutory work required as part of the Domestic Abuse Act 2021.
- Strategic Housing, with support from Community Safety, have developed a commissioning and procurement plan for domestic abuse supported accommodation, in line with the Safe Accommodation duties within the Domestic Abuse Act 2021.
- Community Safety are due to commission another two Domestic Homicide Reviews in early 2024 and will be working with the Coordinators/Chairs of Safeguarding Adults Reviews and Drug-Related Death panels on joint learning and recommendations.
- Gateshead Council continue to support the VRU with Northumbria-wide learning from DHRs and will be part of the Northumbria OPCC pilot site for the Domestic Abuse Commissioner's Domestic Homicide Oversight Mechanism, along with Newcastle, Sunderland, Northumberland and North Tyneside.
- Gateshead Council continue to offer an in-house Domestic Abuse Service, providing specialist support to victim/survivors of any gender, and their children. Gateshead Domestic Abuse Service also deliver a Behaviour Change Service which provides 1:1 intervention with perpetrators of domestic abuse.
- Gateshead Council commissioned a six-month strategic review of domestic abuse, which is currently in its final consultation stage with key Strategic Directors. The final

report and options appraisal will go to the Gateshead Domestic Abuse Partnership Board for decision making on 9 February 2024.

- The priority for the Gateshead Domestic Abuse Partnership over the next 6 months is to review the domestic abuse needs assessment, produce a Gateshead Domestic Abuse Strategy, and deliver on the recommissioning of Safe Accommodation for victim/survivors of domestic abuse.

Serious and Organised Crime *(Strategic Lead: Superintendent Pitt – Northumbria Police)*

- Operation Redrock was established in response to the high number of drug-related deaths in Central Gateshead and aims to help partners understand the intelligence picture. This operation allows for a quick response to any high harm drugs intelligence. As part of this operation, a lot of disruption activity has been ongoing and has resulted in the seizure of cash, weapons, drugs and vehicles.
- Disruption of serious and organised crime activity continues. In the last six months partners have worked together to target the illegal tobacco trade through the use of closure orders and the seizure of illegal tobacco, vapes and cash. A number of warrants have also been executed at residential addresses linked to drug supply.

STRATEGIC THEME 2: Thriving Communities

Anti-Social Behaviour *(Strategic Lead: Paul Thompson – Tyne and Wear Fire and Rescue Service)*

- A review of the ASB Case Review (Community Triggers) process took place following the ASB Strategic Board in late 2023, resulting in region wide task and finish group being established (inc all 6 local authorities & Northumbria police), looking at recommendations taken from an independent review that was carried out in 2023 by Resolve. The aim of the task and finish group is to identify a standardised structure and pathway, that allows for better informed decision making, robust thresholds and less punitive time lines for partners to work towards.
- Community Safety has secured funding from the UK Shared Prosperity Fund that will provide a significant uplift to current youth outreach offer. Applications were received from 14 agencies, seven of which have been awarded funding to deliver a range of youth provision over the next 12 months, across several areas of Gateshead. Provision will run from February 2024 – March 2025. There has been an additional post funded by Public Health, to support with this provision, the post will manage the monitoring and reporting in line with UKSPF requirements as well as support providers in finding funding to continue the delivery post 2025.
- Completed the review of job profiles, roles and responsibilities for the new ASB investigation unit. It is hoped that a comprehensive team will be in place by April 2024.
- Operation Impact, was carried out in Gateshead which resulted in a multi-agency response to addressing key community safety and anti-social behaviour concerns within Central Gateshead. This included numerous arrests, seizure of weapons, drugs and counterfeit goods – as well as visits to over 1,000 properties, and engagement with residents and local businesses.

Locality Working (Gateshead Council – Lead: Neil Bouch)

- A Localities Project Manager has been appointed and is now in post to support the implementation of locality working and embedding the approach across the Borough.

- The funding received from Safer Streets Round 4 for a multi-agency co-located hub in Birtley and Lamesley wards has now ended. Analysis shows that there was a 34% reduction in anti-social behaviour reported (while across Gateshead as a whole anti-social behaviour increased by 5%)
- Four key workstreams have been developed: Connected Communities; Connected Partners; Data, Evaluation and Learning; Governance and Communications.
- Colocation of services is now underway in other localities in the borough, including Leam Lane and Blaydon Libraries/facilities, as well as collocating alongside partners at Teams Life Centre and St Chad's. Work is also underway to develop the offer at Wrekenton Hub, linking in with the family hub that will be based there.
- The Neighbourhood Management team is now transitioning to locality contracts; this should be complete by 5th February. The team will then move from five operational areas to four localities, in line with partners and the strategy.
- The Early Help service has realigned its operational geography and cases are now being allocated based upon four locality geographies. Early Help managers are engaging with Locality Coordinators in each area to develop working relationships.
- Proposals to focus on four broad localities aligned with current ward boundaries are in development, linked to LloN data and need, and in line with partners and alignment with the Early Help team and housing teams.
- Work is continuing with a wide range of internal and external partners to further develop the partnership / team around the community approach across the borough.
- A work programme is underway to assist the roll out of the locality model boroughwide.
- Regular meetings between Elected Members and Locality Coordinators are in diaries and designed to ensure that stakeholders are fully sighted on local activity and issues.
- Locality plans have been developed covering the whole of the borough and these, as with the south, reflect a wide range of activity designed to address Thrive outcomes.
- Working procedures and learning that demonstrate the impact of locality working through a range of case studies involving numerous partners have been implemented.

Reducing Re-offending *(Strategic Lead – Jo Dixon – Probation Service North East)*

- Gateshead's Youth Justice Service was inspected by His Majesty's Inspectorate of Probation (HMIP) in February 2023. The service was rated "Good" overall, with "Outstanding" implementation and delivery. There were a total of seven recommendations made by the Inspectorate, which have been incorporated into a development plan and into the Youth Justice Service Strategic Plan.
- The Youth Justice Service has been awarded the Digital Transformation in Social Work award at the National Social Worker of the Year Awards 2023.
- Youth Justice Service have produced a Digital Me video with Digital Voice, a co-produced animated film capturing their experiences of how they became involved in offending behaviours, their experiences of youth justice services and what worked for them to stop offending. The video can be viewed on YouTube: <https://youtu.be/tnoyL3OhF5A>
- Gateshead Youth Justice Service was allocated funding to deliver the Turnaround Programme. "Turnaround was developed by the Ministry of Justice, is based on similar principles to those underlying the Supporting Families programme, including the view that children on the cusp of offending often have complex needs.

Turnaround funding will support YOTs, and their local strategic partners, to expand best practice in early intervention” MOJ. The delivery model adopted in Gateshead is through our Early Help Service.

- Divert from Charge is used to prevent children and young people being charged by police unless in extreme cases, such as offences that could lead to a remand and instead, cases are referred through to a panel process before a final decision is reached. As a result of the Divert from Charge arrangement, young people are not to be labelled as offenders, this helps to prevent young people from forming deviant or delinquent identities that may impact on their development. The process avoids unnecessary disproportionality in the criminal justice system and enables tailored diversionary interventions which are therapeutic, targeted, and appropriate whilst avoiding the stigma of conviction.

STRATEGIC THEME 3: Protecting People from Harm

Hate Crime and Tension Monitoring (Northumbria Police – Lead: Jamie Pitt)

- Gateshead Council’s 2024-26 Hate Crime strategy and action plan is being developed by members of our Hate Crime Tensions and Monitoring group. Key areas include raising public awareness of hate crime reporting, increasing the level of hate crime reporting to police and promoting hate crime education.
- As a response to the Israel – Hamas conflict, we are working with Northumbria police on partnership capability and the development of a region wide collaborative response at a strategic, tactical and operational level following a number of hate crime related incidents in relation to Op Tarlac (National operation relating to the Israel and Palestine conflict).
- Ongoing relationship development with key community and sporting groups in Gateshead to increase confidence in Police and hate crime reporting. Ongoing work with Durham and Northumberland Football Associations looking at education and support for reporting at a grassroots level.
- Central Engagement Team continue to offer Hate Crime champions training across the partnership and have provided tailored awareness sessions to VCS and Public sector organisations.

Preventing Radicalisation (Gateshead Council – Lead: Adam Lindridge)

- New Prevent Duty Guidance 2023 and statutory instrument to bring it into law was set out in September 2023. The PDG (Prevent Duty Guidance) is statutory guidance under Section 29 of the Counter-Terrorism and Security Act 2015 – and, subject to Parliamentary approval, it was due to come into force on 31 December 2023
- In addition, a Prevent Duty Toolkit has also been published which identifies a series of specified benchmarks for Local Authorities to deliver against as part of its Prevent Duty.
- The Home Office will use new benchmarks as part of its local authority assurance programme to monitor the delivery of Prevent. The assurance programme involves a 1:1 discussion with the Regional Prevent Adviser, where local authorities are expected to demonstrate their compliance against each of the benchmark criteria. This is due to take place in spring 2024.

Combatting Drugs (Gateshead Council – Lead: Julia Sharp)

- The Local Combatting Drugs Partnership continues to meet on a Northumbria Police footprint, chaired by the Police and Crime Commissioner, with Gateshead Director of Public Health, Alice Wiseman, as the Senior Reporting Officer. A needs assessment and the national outcomes framework has informed the delivery plan for the partnership.
- We are now reaching the latter part of Year 2 of 3 of the increased investment in substance misuse provision. This has resulted in scrutiny from the National Combatting Drugs Unit to ensure that the funding is translating into performance and outcomes. There is a particular focus on the numbers of people accessing structured treatment, access to residential rehab, and continuity of care from prison to community.
- Planning for the 3rd year of increased investment is now underway. Gateshead has been awarded a grant of over £2.4 million to continue to build capacity within the substance misuse treatment system. The funding runs until the end of March 2025, after which we have no certainty of future funding.
- The number of cases reviewed in the Gateshead Drug Related Death meeting remains higher than we would like, but stable. There have been 20 suspected drug-related death cases reviewed in 2023. This figure is lower than in previous years. We do not know the exact cause of death at the point of our local review, however, the latest ONS Drug Related Death figures were released in December and cover the period 2020-2022. This three-year rolling data shows that the standardised rate per 100,000 Deaths related to Drug Misuse (persons) is 12.8, which is an increase from the 2019-21 rate of 11.9. This rate shows the male rate as 21.3 and the female rate as 4.4. The North East continues to have the highest rate of deaths relating to drug poisoning and drug misuse nationally.

STRATEGIC THEME 4:

Strengthening Governance & Accountability

- Carried out a review of Gateshead Council's Community Safety function. The recommendations have been presented to the Community Safety Board.
- Trialled a new process for undertaking the partnership strategic assessment. This new process involves more in-depth discussions with partners and subject matter experts in each thematic area and will help identify the strategic priorities for 2024/25.
- Discussions are ongoing with Northumbria Police to consider how we can improve perception and feelings of safety concerns through increased communications and media coverage to outline the breadth of proactive work undertaken by the partnership in Gateshead.

5. Recommendations

5.1 Housing, Environment and Healthy Communities OSC is asked to:

- (i) Comment on the activities undertaken in relation to the strategic priorities of the Community Safety Board.
- (ii) Continue to receive six-monthly Community Safety updates.
- (iii) Identify any issues/areas OSC may want to scrutinise in detail at a future Committee meeting.