

## EXECUTIVE

### 18<sup>th</sup> April 2024

<b>Report Title</b>	<b>Northamptonshire Serious Violence Duty Strategy 2023 to 2025</b>
<b>Lead Member</b>	Councillor Mark Rowley – Executive Member for Housing, Communities and Levelling Up
<b>Report Author</b>	Jane Bethea – Director of Public Health & Wellbeing  Mike Greenway – Strategic Lead for Community Safety

<b>Key Decision</b>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
<b>Is the decision eligible for call-in by Scrutiny?</b>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
<b>Are there public sector equality duty implications?</b>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
<b>Does the report contain confidential or exempt information (whether in appendices or not)?</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No
<b>Applicable paragraph number/s for exemption from publication under Schedule 12A Local Government Act 1972</b>	N/A
<b>Which Corporate Plan priority does the report most closely align with?</b>	Safe and thriving places

### List of Appendices

**Appendix A** – Northamptonshire Serious Violence Duty Strategy 2023 to 2025

**Appendix B** – Investment profile 2023/24

**Appendix C** – Climate Change Impact Assessment tool

### **1. Purpose of Report**

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- 1.1. This report asks the Executive to endorse and adopt the Northamptonshire Serious Violence Duty Strategy 2023-25 (the strategy).
- 1.2. The strategy is a partnership response to the requirements of the Serious Violence Duty placed on five specified authorities. As a unitary local authority, North Northamptonshire Council is a specified authority.

## **2. Executive Summary**

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- 2.1. The Serious Violence Duty (the duty) was introduced by the Government as part of the Police, Crime and Sentencing Act 2022. This was in response to rising levels of knife crime, gun crime and homicides in the UK. It came into effect on 31<sup>st</sup> January 2023.
- 2.2. The duty places a responsibility on certain specified authorities, which includes local authorities, to work together to identify what the levels of serious violence are in the local area and implement a delivery plan to tackle and reduce it. The specified authorities have created a partnership to meet the aspects of the duty called the Northamptonshire Serious Violence Prevention Partnership (NSVPP).
- 2.3. Identifying the levels of serious violence, and the causal factors has been undertaken through a Strategic Needs Assessment (SNA). The SNA was produced using multiple data and information sets covering 5 years' worth of data from across the partnership base. This was considered critical so the partnership approach to tackling serious violence reflects not just policing and crime data, but also data from NHS services, youth offending, probation, housing, public health and schools and education.
- 2.4. The SNA found that 7.1% of all crimes across the 5-year dataset analysis were serious violence crimes. Rape and sexual offences accounted for 49% of serious violence, followed by knife crime (25.9%) and robbery (17.3%). The key drivers for serious violence across Northamptonshire are: deprivation and poverty - with 35.5% of serious violence occurring in the most deprived areas of the county across the 5 year analysis; emotional and mental health issues; substance misuse and adverse childhood experiences.
- 2.5. The SNA made 17 recommendations, which have informed and shaped the strategy. The strategic themes focus on leadership and cultural change; data sharing, evidence and evaluation; tackling vulnerabilities and delivering place-based interventions.
- 2.6. The Home Office has allocated funding to support local delivery, through each of the police and crime commissioner's offices. This funding has supported interventions in 2023/24 and a further allocation will be available in 2024/25.

## **3. Recommendations**

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- 3.1 It is recommended that the Executive:
  - a) Adopts the Northamptonshire Serious Violence Duty Strategy 2023-25; and
  - b) Delegates authority to the Executive Member for Housing, Communities and Levelling Up in consultation with the Director of Public Health and

Wellbeing to ensure the strategy is implemented through the Northamptonshire Serious Violence Prevention Partnership.

- 3.2 Reason for Recommendations – to ensure that the Council, as a specified partner, meets the requirements of the Serious Violence Duty.
- 3.3 Alternative Options Considered – The only alternative option would be not to adopt the strategy. This would have significant negative impact on our ability to fulfil all parts of the duty and our role in ensuring equitable investment of the Home Office funding for North Northamptonshire would be compromised.

#### **4. Report Background**

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- 4.1. Serious violence can be devastating. Northamptonshire has seen several tragedies with young people losing their lives and many other incidents where victims and their families are affected severely.
- 4.2. It has been widely recognised for some time that arrests of and enforcement against the perpetrators of such crime cannot solve the problems alone. The introduction of the Serious Violence Duty as part of the Police, Crime and Sentencing Act 2022 puts a much stronger emphasis on preventative approaches to tackling serious violence. Several organisations are specified authorities under the duty:
- Local authorities.
  - Police constabulary.
  - Integrated Care Board NHS.
  - Justice: Probation Service and Youth Offending Service.
  - Fire and Rescue Service.
- 4.3. The duty requires the specified authorities to work together to address the following:
- Consider what serious violence is in their locality,
  - Create a definition of serious violence,
  - Identify causal factors relating to this serious violence, and
  - Implement a delivery plan to reduce it.
- 4.4. While Police and Crime Commissioners are not specified authorities under the duty, they have convening powers and are the responsible bodies for the Government's funding to support the delivery of the duty strategy in the local area.
- 4.5. The Office of the Northamptonshire Police, Fire and Crime Commissioner (OPFCC) are using their convening powers to bring the specified authorities together and deliver the above requirements. The Northamptonshire Serious Violence Prevention Partnership (NVSP) was formed as a multi-agency

partnership to develop and deliver the duty for the county, representing the five specified authorities and other key partners. The following Council officers are part of the NVSPP's Steering Group:

- Deputy Director of Public Health
- Strategic Lead for Community Safety
- Safer Communities Officer (Serious Violence Reduction)

Each specified authority has a Senior Responsible Officer (SRO) for the duty. The Council's SRO is the Director of Public Health and Wellbeing.

- 4.6. To understand what the levels and types of serious violence occurring in Northamptonshire are a Strategic Needs Assessment (SNA) has been produced. It was informed and scoped by a comprehensive analysis of 5 years' worth of data from across the partnership base, including police and crime data, education and schools, probation and youth offending, housing, public health and NHS services.
- 4.7. The SNA identified that serious violence crimes accounted for 7.1% of all crimes occurring across the 5-year period. Rape and sexual offences accounted for 49% of serious violence overall, which was followed by knife crime at 25.9% and robbery (business and personal) at 17.3%. Serious violence has impacted on every local area in the county with 35.5% of serious violence occurring in the most deprived areas, based on Local Super Output Areas (LSOA).
- 4.8. The SNA has translated the findings from the analysis into 17 recommendations. These have informed and shaped the strategy and the action plan (**Appendix A**). The strategy outlines the commitments and priorities for the NSVPP, and how it will work with the communities of Northamptonshire to prevent serious violence. There will be a particular focus on children and young people under the age of 25. The strategy was formally launched by the NSVPP on 6 March 2024 at an event held at the Guildhall Northampton.
- 4.9. The funding allocation from the Home Office for Northamptonshire in 2023/24 has been utilised two-fold. A proportion of the funding has supported the production of the SNA and the strategy development. The other proportion has supported a wide range of interventions in local areas across the county and they are:-
  - The Saints Foundation – Engage Programme
  - NDAS – Your Power 2 Change DA Perpetrator Programme
  - Family support Link – Parents Under Pressure Programme
  - The Safety Box- Knife Crime intervention (via Probation)
  - Upskill U – Schools based awareness sessions and workshops (Northants Police week of action), Exodus.
  - Northants Police – weeks of action.
  - Free2Talk – Youth Knowledge Bank

- Northamptonshire Children’s Trust – Participation Team- Engagement Videos
  - Bleed Kit and Mannequin – Fire service Engagement Team, OPFCC Youthwork Team, LA Serious Violence Coordinators
  - Blue Butterfly – Northants Police
  - Primary School Healthy Relationships Programme - Life Education
  - Crimestoppers- Fearless
- 4.10. The 2024/25 funding allocation will be targeted to activities and operations that will deliver the strategy and the action plan. The OPFCC, through its fund holding agreements with the Home Office, is currently managing a grant application process for projects and initiatives for utilising the 2024/25 funding. The specified partners are engaged with the process including evaluation of project bids to ensure an equitable range of projects across both north and west Northamptonshire.
- 4.11. The Home Office funding is supporting dedicated resources for the duty and the NSVPP. A delivery manager on a fixed-term contract within the OPFCC co-ordinates partnership activity overall. Northamptonshire Observatory has undertaken the SNA and will be supporting further analytical work going forward. Alongside this, both North Northamptonshire Council and West Northamptonshire Council are receiving a proportion of the funding to support 50% of the salary costs for an officer in each council to co-ordinate local activity. In the Council’s case this is the Safer Communities Officer (Serious Violence Reduction).

## **5. Issues and Choices**

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- 5.1. The duty is statutory and applies to the specified authorities listed in 4.1 above; however, it is a fundamental part of the duty that they work collaboratively to deliver the requirements. This is the basis of establishing the NSVPP.
- 5.2. Several years ago, some areas of the country were identified for establishing Violence Reduction Units (VRU). These areas have largely been cities and metropolitan areas where serious violence, particularly around gun crime and knife crime was prolific. VRUs have mainly been led and managed by police forces, which in some cases has prevented a wider input from other organisations able to bring effective public health approaches. Most recently, and with the establishment of the duty, they have progressed to become Violence Reduction Partnerships (VRP). This is recognised as much more effective way of embedding a public health and preventative approach to tackling serious violence, and not one focused solely on enforcement against the criminals and gang leaders.
- 5.3. The learning and experiences of VRUs has shaped and informed the duty. In addition to this, a higher regard is being given to the importance of having an established partnership arrangement to deliver the duty locally. The

establishment of the NSVPP fulfils this requirement and reflects the approach of other parts of the country.

5.4. The strategy sets the mission, values and focus for how the NSVPP will work with the communities of Northamptonshire to prevent serious violence. It is widely recognised that violence is preventable, and our communities should be able to feel safe and free from the threat of violence. The aims of the NSVPP are to:

- Stabilise and reduce violence in the short-term.
- Understand the underlying causes of violence in Northamptonshire.
- Co-ordinate Northamptonshire's communities and public organisations to address those causes in the long-term.

5.5. To achieve this, the NSVPP will follow a public health approach to preventing and tackling serious violence. This recognises an approach that follows the following steps:

1. Gain a clear understanding of violence by defining and monitoring the extent of the problem.
2. Identify risk and protective factors that may be causing violence due to their presence or absence.
3. Develop, trial and evaluate interventions to reduce risks and enhance protective factors
4. Roll out effective interventions based on evidence of what works.

## **6. Next Steps**

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6.1. The strategy was formally launched on 6<sup>th</sup> March 2024 at an event held at the Guildhall Northampton. A Members' briefing was also held via MS Teams on 28<sup>th</sup> February 2024.

6.2. The next steps are for the NVSPP to implement the strategy through the action plan.

## **7. Implications (including financial implications)**

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### **7.1. Resources, Financial and Transformation**

7.1.1. The Government is making funding available to localities to support the specified authorities with the delivery of their strategies. Police and Crime Commissioner's offices have convening and fund holding powers under the SVD and as such are responsible to Government for the management of those funds. The local SVD arrangements involving the specified partners take decisions on funding allocations.

7.1.2. For the current financial year 2023/24, the funding allocation was £360,000. For financial year 2024/25 it will be £570,274. As referred to in para 4.4 above, the

Home Office agreed the Labour and Non-Labour (intervention) costs. This financial year's allocation has been targeted to a range of interventions through a simplified bidding process (**Appendix B** refers). The main reason for this has been the time constraints with producing the SNA and the strategy. Several existing county-wide projects have benefited from the extra funding adding value and enhancing their objectives.

- 7.1.3. For financial year 2024/25, there will be a competitive bidding process for the grant funding (£570K). A market engagement event was held in early autumn 2023 for interested providers and organisations to discuss and help shape the approach. The grant scheme opened on 26<sup>th</sup> January 2024 for three weeks to 16<sup>th</sup> February 2024 whereby organisations made applications. Evaluation and moderation processes are in the final stages and Grant Awards will be made shortly.
- 7.1.4. The Grant Allocation has provisions for splitting the funds between labour costs (associated with preparing and developing the SNA and strategies, including analysis, local co-ordinating officers, etc.); and non-labour costs (associated with intervention projects and solutions etc.).
- 7.1.5. All transactional processes covering payments of grants for projects and other costs will be undertaken by the OPFCC in line with the terms of the Home Office Grant Agreement highlighted in 7.1.1 above.
- 7.1.6. The funding from the Home Office is currently up to 31<sup>st</sup> March 2025. Beyond that, the specified authorities will need to have collectively agreed any future investment plans in order to continue fulfilling the requirements of the duty. This will require looking at where successful interventions to deliver the duty can be included in mainstream work or where other resources can be secured for such activity. Further work on this will be undertaken over the next 6 months and included within the MTFP if necessary.

## 7.2. **Legal and Governance**

- 7.2.1 As set out earlier in this report, the duty is statutory and the Council is a specified partner. Currently, the work to deliver the duty and the strategy is through the NSVPP, with oversight from each community safety partnership (CSP). The Council is also the responsible local authority partner within the North Northants CSP, through the Director of Public Health and Wellbeing and the Executive Member for Housing, Communities and Levelling Up.
- 7.2.2 While decisions on allocating the Home Office funding are taken through the NSVPP, as set out in section 7.1 above, there may be situations where the Council needs to consider any future governance implications for itself as a specified partner. Such matters will be presented to the Executive for consideration with advice from the Monitoring Officer.

### **7.3. Relevant Policies and Plans**

- 7.3.1 The duty and the strategy align significantly with the Community Safety Partnership Plan 2022-25 and the delivery plans of the Combatting Drugs and Alcohol Partnership. All aspects of the work of these areas are underpinned by a public health approach, which places a significant focus on prevention and early intervention.
- 7.3.2 The strategy will support our Corporate Plan priority of 'Safe and Thriving Places', particularly with tackling the root causes of difficult issues that lead to crime and ASB. There are other aspects of our Corporate Plan priorities the strategy will support including active and fulfilled lives, better and brighter futures and connected communities.

### **7.4. Risk**

- 7.4.1 There are no immediate financial risks associated with the duty and the strategy's delivery, largely due to the Home Office funding in place to 2025. However, as set out in the financial sections of this report, consideration will need to be given to future investment requirements.
- 7.4.2 As with any partnership arrangement, effective delivery of its strategy and plans requires commitment from each partner organisation. The duty is upon each of the specified authorities; however, there are risks associated with changes in an individual organisation's priorities, especially financial with the current climate. The NSVPP will monitor this closely.

### **7.5. Consultation**

- 7.5.1. Preparation of the strategy involved consultation with key stakeholders, which included the Home Office in relation to it meeting the requirements of the duty and the funding arrangements.
- 7.5.2. NSVPP held a stakeholders' event in November 2023 to engage a wide range of partners, delivery organisations across the public and voluntary sectors. This helped shape the final version of the strategy and the action plans.

### **7.6. Consideration by Executive Advisory Panel**

- 7.6.1. The strategy has not been presented to an EAP as this is not singularly a Council strategy. The strategy has been developed via a partnership arrangement in which the Council is a specified authority.

### **7.7. Consideration by Scrutiny**

- 7.7.1 The strategy has not been presented to Scrutiny at this stage. However, it was highlighted at a Members' briefing event around the duty and the strategy that



consideration could be given to Health Scrutiny receiving updates on progress with delivery and where key interventions are making a difference.

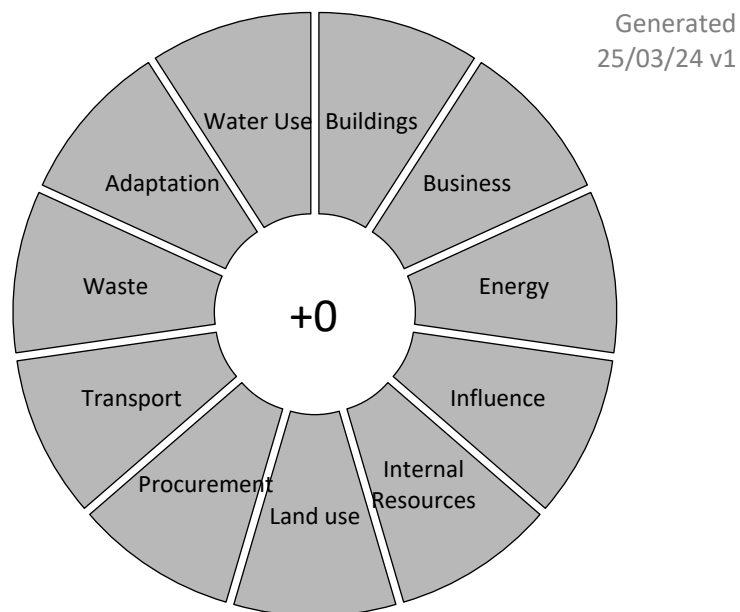
## 7.8. Equality Implications

7.8.1. An Equalities Screening Assessment has been undertaken and is listed as a background paper in section 8. The ESA has identified only positive and neutral impacts in relation to the equality groups.

## 7.9. Climate Impact

7.9.1 With the Council's declaration of a climate emergency in July 2021 and the approval of the Carbon Management Plan in December 2022, we have committed to working towards becoming a carbon neutral council by 2030.

7.9.2 An assessment of the strategy against the Climate Change Impact Assessment tool (**Appendix C** refers) indicates no impacts for each of the categories.



North Northamptonshire Council has committed to being a carbon neutral organisation by 2030, 5 yrs & 9 mos away.

## 7.10. Community Impact

7.10.1. Serious violence impacts significantly on communities as well as individuals and their families. The consequences can be devastating for everyone and when serious violence occurs, including tragedies, the impact on the local community can cause tensions and reprisals.

7.10.2. The strategy will be embedded into our approaches and arrangements to locality working and the Local Area Partnerships that are in place.

## **7.11. Crime and Disorder Impact**

7.11.1. The duty and the strategy make a significant contribution to keeping people safer and being able to live better and healthier lives. The range of interventions the strategy will cover will aim to prevent people from becoming involved in serious violence, which affects them and their families.

## **8. Background Papers**

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8.1 The following documents support this report:-

- Serious Violence Duty
- North Northants Community Safety Partnership Plan 2022-25
- Equalities Screening Assessment