

HEALTH AND WELL-BEING BOARD

15 FEBRUARY 2022

WORCESTERSHIRE SAFER COMMUNITIES BOARD

Board Sponsor

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Author

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Priorities

Mental health & well-being	Yes
Being Active	No
Reducing harm from Alcohol	Yes
Other (specify below)	

Safeguarding

Impact on Safeguarding Children	Yes
Community safety work will involve a focus on children and young people young individually or as part of their family circumstances	
Impact on Safeguarding Adults	Yes
Safeguarding of vulnerable adults is a significant consideration for the SCB and its areas of responsibility	

Item for Decision, Consideration or Information

Consideration

Recommendation

- 1. The Health and Well-being Board (HWB) is asked to:**
 - a) note the content of the report, aimed at highlighting the role of the Worcestershire Safer Communities Board (SCB), updating on current activity and key areas of focus for all partners; and**
 - b) continue to support the work of the Worcestershire Safer Communities Board (SCB), both collectively and as individual agencies.**

Background

- 2. In two tier Local Government, under Section 17 of the Crime and Disorder Act 1998 (the Act), there is a requirement for a county group to take strategic oversight of community safety matters. This complements the work and duties of the statutory Community Safety Partnerships (CSP's), which are set up in north and south Worcestershire and led at District Council level.**

3. The SCB discharges its role through an annual Community Safety Agreement and action plan, the oversight of several priority areas, and the governance of groups working on domestic abuse, substance misuse, reducing offending and Prevent and Protect (counter terrorism). It is chaired by the Director of Public Health.

4. Section 30 of the Health and Social Care Act 2012, places upon the Director of Public Health, a responsibility for their Local Authority's role in co-operating with the police, the probation service and the prison service to assess the risks posed by violent or sexual offenders. They should also work with local criminal justice partners and the West Mercia Police and Crime Commissioner (PCC) to promote safer communities. As such, community safety is a category of activity that can be funded by Public Health Ring Fenced Grant.

5. "Responsible Authorities," are, under the Act, required to exercise their functions with due regard and to do all that they reasonably can to prevent crime and disorder, anti-social behaviour, the misuse of drugs, alcohol and other substances, and reduce reoffending. The Responsible Authorities are members of the SCB (and CSP's) and in Worcestershire comprise of:

- Worcestershire County Council (WCC);
- six District Councils;
- West Mercia Police;
- Hereford and Worcester Fire and Rescue Service;
- Herefordshire and Worcestershire Clinical Commissioning Group; and
- the Probation Service.

6. There are additional senior representatives from Worcestershire Children First, the PCC's office, and the Voluntary Community Sector.

Sub-group activity

7. The SCB is positioned to take strategic oversight and has five strategic sub-groups; summarised below with an update on recent activity, priorities and changing legislation.

Worcestershire Domestic Abuse Partnership Board

8. Worcestershire Domestic Abuse Partnership Board is the co-ordination point for supporting a partnership approach to domestic abuse in Worcestershire. There has been the recent implementation of the Domestic Abuse Act 2021, including new duties for Tier 1 Local Authorities (WCC), to provide safe accommodation and support services for victims of domestic abuse and their families. A new Domestic Abuse strategy for Worcestershire has been published and there are a range of actions being developed to ensure that its ambitions are met. A significant area of work is to refresh the policy and procedure on Domestic Homicide Reviews. It is clear from many reviews, the cross-cutting nature of challenges that people have, particularly with mental health problems and substance misuse, which are recurring themes.

Worcestershire Prevent Strategy Group

9. Worcestershire Prevent Strategy Group's current activity includes delivering the duties described in the Counter Terrorism Act 2015 and the Prevent Duty Guidance, as part of the Government's CONTEST Strategy. The focus is on training of staff of Specified Authorities (as described in legislation), Local Authority councillors, and schools. In addition, supporting schools with safeguarding responsibilities who make referrals when necessary. There are excellent working arrangements with all Specified Authorities and notably in the assessment of individuals who are referred to the Worcestershire multi agency Channel Panel, who consider how to support those, who may be at risk of radicalisation.

Worcestershire Protect Group

10. The Government is due to legislate on a new "Protect Duty," which will require improved protective security and preparedness at certain buildings and open spaces, to mitigate the impact of any potential terror attack to places where the public have access. The responsibility for oversight and implementation of the duty will be clarified in the legislation (potentially to be enacted by late 2022). The work of the Worcestershire Protect Group to date is primarily focused upon Local Authorities, as it awaits to see how other public bodies will be affected, such as the NHS.

Worcestershire Substance Misuse Oversight Group

11. Worcestershire Substance Misuse Oversight Group oversees criminal justice and health issues in relation to drugs and alcohol misuse. It is supporting the commissioning of a new five-year Drug and Alcohol Strategy and is an important co-ordination point for the development of commissioning approaches, policy and best practice across the system. The Group reports back to the Worcestershire Health Improvement Group on a cyclical basis.

Worcestershire Reducing Reoffending Group

12. Whilst reoffending is primarily a criminal justice matter, there are many crossovers, particularly in relation to mental health, substance misuse, homelessness, and rough sleeping. A key piece of work for the Worcestershire Reducing Reoffending Group is an assessment of the offender housing and support pathways, to consider the system approach and how better to co-ordinate and improve for the benefit of the individual offender. New reducing violence related statutory duties will be forthcoming and this will require further co-operation between criminal justice agencies and NHS partners.

The Partnership approach

13. Significant co-operation takes place to improve the lives, health and wellbeing of people in Worcestershire. This happens at many levels and includes, for instance, formal co-operation and co-commissioning with the PCC. The PCC's policy ambitions, through the Safer West Mercia Plan, focus on preventive approaches and are well aligned with those of the SCB. There are several relevant significant PCC sub-strategies and action plans, including domestic abuse and the support for and commissioning of services for victims of sexual violence and abuse. Separately a multi-agency needs assessment on the mental health commissioning responsibilities for victims of sexual violence is being finalised.

14. Safeguarding is central to the SCB and its partners work, and the SCB is a signatory to a joint working protocol with the Adults Safeguarding Board, Children's Safeguarding Partnership and the HWB. There have been regular meetings between the chairs of these groups to consider cross-cutting issues. Much strategic and operational activity takes place in this area and notably, a focus on child criminal exploitation overseen and led through Worcestershire GET SAFE. The prevention of crime and its impact on actual and potential victims will continue to be a major priority.

15. The SCB works closely with the Public Health analytical team and ensures that Joint Strategic Needs Assessments products are where necessary, focused upon areas of community safety and health. The team is also supporting work with the Police to consider how data and analysis relating to domestic abuse can be improved and redesigned across the partnership and be more effectively utilised.

16. The implementation of the Integrated Care System (ICS) arrangements, with its focus on 'place' and local communities will be a conduit through which enhanced cooperation between the two boards can take place.

Conclusion

17. The SCB provides significant governance, system oversight and opportunities for joint agency working. There is already well-established co-operation and practical interventions that take place, but there is always more that can be achieved and that would both improve community safety and health and wellbeing. The common themes of mental health, substance and alcohol misuse, and domestic abuse will be areas where both the HWB and SCB members will want to continue to focus their strategic and commissioning intentions. New and forthcoming community safety related legislation, the development of the ICS arrangements, and a stronger focus upon the partnership support and commissioning responsibilities for victims of sexual violence will be continued areas of interest to the HWB.

Legal, Financial and HR Implications

18. There are no legal, financial or HR implications arising from this report.

Privacy Impact Assessment

19. There is no privacy impact resultant from this report.

Equality and Diversity Implications

There are not recommendations arising from this report requiring an Equality Impact Assessment at this time.

Contact Points

County Council Contact Points

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Specific Contact Points for this report

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