

Creating a Safer Stafford Borough

SAFER
COMMUNITIES
STRATEGY 2017-2020



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Foreword

Welcome to our Safer Communities Strategy 2017 - 2020 which outlines the Safer Communities Partnership's aims and ambitions that will ensure that Safford Borough continues to be a safe place to live, work and socialise.

At the heart of this strategy is the safety and vibrancy of our residents and visitors to the county town. Anti-social behaviour has generally remained stable with neighbour disputes continuing to provide a nuisance to the community. 2014 welcomed the introduction of the ASB tools and powers.

Community Safety is a complex area of work that requires a number of partners and partnership working. While Council's and partners continue to see a decrease in Government funding the key to the future will be to look at new and innovative ways of working together to ensure we maintain a reduction in crime and keep Stafford Borough a safe place to live, work and enjoy.

Cllr Jeremy Pert – Cabinet Member for Community

Introduction

Community Safety Partnerships remain statutory bodies and are required (in accordance with the Crime and Disorder Act, 1998) to formulate a strategy to reduce crime and disorder, combat substance misuse and reduce re-offending in the local area. In Stafford Borough this function is carried out by the Stafford Borough Strategic Partnership, which comprises of a number of public and private agencies. The partnership is responsible for setting the overall strategic vision for the Borough and for implementing the commissioning framework that will support the achievement of the vision. Sitting underneath this is the Safer Communities Partnership (SCP) who are responsible for formulating the strategic plan that will deliver the outcomes required in making our localities a safer place to work, visit and socialise. The SCP aim to achieve this by implementing a prevention and early intervention approach to service delivery.

Stafford Town Centre is benefitting from a number of major opportunities and growth. A new shopping centre has recently opened, along with new restaurants and a new cinema is due to open. All of these uses broaden the offer to the residents and visitors to Stafford Borough. Stafford Borough is also experiencing growth with additional service personnel and 7000 new homes to be built in the town over the next 15 years. The redevelopment and growth will also bring its own considerations around licensing and policing resources.

Health and wellbeing continues to present a number of key challenges to tackle locally. The population is projected to see significant growth in people aged 65 and over (24%) and in particular those aged 85 and over (52%). The rate of increase in the number of older people in Stafford is faster than the England average and equates to 5,900 additional residents aged 75 and over by 2023. Based on the 2011 Rural and Urban Classification most of Stafford's population live in a rural area. Although living in a rural area has a positive association with peoples satisfaction, it can also present difficulties in accessing services. Recent research also shows that loneliness and isolation is a significant risk factor to wellbeing and independence. The 2011 Census found that 18.2% (23,800 people) of the population had a limiting long-term illness (LLTI), this is higher than the England average. The prevalence of long-term conditions is also projected to increase given the ageing population and increases in unhealthy lifestyles placing an increased burden on future health and social care resources. GP disease registers show that the long term conditions with the highest prevalence in Stafford are hypertension (15%), obesity (9%) of people aged 16 and over, depression (6% of people aged 18 and over), diabetes (6% of people aged 17 and over) and asthma (6%).

A number of challenges are posed for the future years but with successful partnership working and recognition that no single agency can tackle problems that affect the community, we are confident that we can make a positive difference to the Stafford Borough residents and visitors.

What we have achieved so far

The previous strategy recognised the following priorities:

Priority 1 – Supporting Schools

The Supporting Schools Programme is a programme of prevention and early help support that facilitates and co-ordinates agency support in the school environment and in the wider community. Areas of focus are: crime and anti-social behaviour; healthy relationships; hate crime, bullying, mental health, wider vulnerabilities and indicators of social deprivation. The Supporting Schools programme continues to develop, as now all but one of the High Schools in Stafford Borough are signed up. Entrust were commissioned to deliver the programme of behalf of Stafford Borough Council in order to utilise their existing links with schools this has proved invaluable.

Priority 2 – Crime & Anti-Social Behaviour

The Safer Communities Partnership has introduced a multi-agency group into partnership to address issues around crime & anti-social behaviour, a number of achievements have been recognised included:

- Right Stuff currently engaging with 10 Looked after Children (4 from care homes and 6 from foster placements). A free taster session was put on for children from the SWA refuge, following the SPACE Scheme. Weekly sessions were now being planned.
- The One Recovery Project going well. There were 6 or 7 regular clients who regularly attended, but more could be accommodated.
- Support has been allocated to traffic calming measures at Western Downs
- T3 attended the leisure centre and park during the summer holidays. Leaflets have been purchased for T3 to help with engagement around substance misuse
- 10,000 swatch cards had been produced advising about internet safety and how an individual can protect themselves from cyber bullying or malicious communications. These will be distributed to high schools.

Funding of approximately £10,000 was allocated to the group in 2016-17.

Stafford Borough Council now has at its disposal a number of new tools and powers through the Anti-social Behaviour, Crime and Policing Act 2014. A number of these powers have already been successfully utilised by the Safer Communities Partnership and has helped to tackle ASB within Stafford Borough.

The Office of the Police & Crime Commissioner re-commissioned the SPACE scheme in 2015 and this was successfully commissioned again in 2016. In Stafford Borough almost 800 young people benefitted from diversionary activities over the summer holidays.

Stafford Borough Council continue to invest in state of the art CCTV equipment and monitoring The Council has, made a considerable investment in their CCTV function over the past five years, which has seen a complete refurbishment of the CCTV control room - located at the Civic Centre. The investment that has been made on both the hardware and software has vastly improved the service provided.

The Safer Communities Partnership continued to invest in initiatives to reduce crime and disorder in regard to the Night Time Economy. Street Pastors and Taxi Marshals continue to provide services to late night revellers in Stafford Town and have excellent links into the Pubwatch radio system and the CCTV control room, ensuring a safe night out for all of our visitors.

Priority 3 – Reoffending

The Safer Communities Partnership commissioned Heantun Housing Association to undertake a project to reduced reoffending by working with those hardest to reach groups across the Borough. Funding of £45,000 was made available for the running of this project during 2016-17, support was provided for offenders and those at risk of reoffending and support to over 16's at risk of offending. Heantun allocated staff members to attend the Vulnerabilities Hub to ensure easier access to referrals from partner agencies. During 2016-17 27 referrals were made to the project.

Safer Communities Partnership Plan

This strategy has been informed by the recommendations outlined in the Stafford Borough Community Safety Partnership Community Safety Strategic Assessment which is produced on an annual basis this year by Staffordshire County Council's Insight team and the Research & Analysis Unit at Staffordshire Police. The Assessments aims to provide structured intelligence to help inform the strategic decision-making for the Safer Communities Partnership, helping commissioners to determine the priorities that require particular attention.

The PCC has allocated a sum of £96,055 to the partnership under the Locality Deal which will be used for the delivery of initiatives that contribute to the achievement of the objectives identified. In the current climate of financial restraints and less resources it has never been as important to work collaboratively with our partner agencies using more innovative ways of working. Stafford Borough Safer Communities Partnership recognise the importance of strategic links to the Office of the Police & Crime Commissioner's Safer, Fairer, United, Communities Strategy. The current 4 priorities set by the Police and Crime Commissioner include:

- Early Intervention
- Supporting Victims and Witnesses
- Managing Offenders
- Public Confidence

The Community Safety Assessment was formulated using MoRile methodology through a Partnership workshop. MoRile provides a consistent approach to the identification of priorities, assessing impact, harm to individuals, physical, psychological and financial, the community, public expectation and environmental impact; likelihood, confidence and organisational position taking account of the CSPs capacity and capability to address the threat. Although all thematic threats were considered only those assessed as greatest risk to the CSPs communities and those that the SCP felt they could impact upon have been taken forward as priorities for analysis¹:

- Domestic Abuse
- Anti-Social Behaviour

Cross cutting themes identified are:

- Alcohol
- Mental Health

¹ Community Safety Strategic Assessment

Whilst not in the Community Safety Assessment the Partnership will continue to recognise the importance of the Statutory Duty's around Safeguarding and Prevent. A number of policies and procedures have been put in place to ensure that Stafford Borough Council and it's partners are fulfilling the requirements of the duty.

Hotspot Locations

The strategic Assessment highlighted Stafford Town Centre & Stafford North and Stafford South as hotspot locations. In these areas the rates of Domestic Abuse, Anti-social behaviour are higher per 1,000 population than the district average.

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Domestic Abuse

Domestic Abuse is recognised as an under-reported issue, with much abuse hidden. Stafford Borough has seen a significant upward trend in Domestic Abuse incidents since May 2014. While this is not necessarily a negative trend (confidence in reporting meaning that victims are not suffering in silence), it has an impact on the CSP's ability to manage the issue from a resourcing perspective.

In the 12 months to the end of August 2016 there were a total of 1109 domestic crimes reported to Staffordshire Police in Stafford Borough, which is equivalent to approximately 9.9 crimes per 1000 residents aged 16 and over. Of these, 77% were violence against the person offence. The crime Survey for England and Wales (CSEW) finding from the year ending March 2015 estimate that 8.2% of women and 4.0% of men reported experience any type of Domestic Abuse in the last year. Applying these proportions to the 16+ population of Stafford Borough suggest that approximately 2,300 males and 4,600 females aged 16 and above have experienced Domestic Abuse in the past year.

The recent Domestic Abuse Needs Assessment identified that Police reported crimes and incidents only reveals part of the picture: by combining information from commissioned providers, data relating to people attending accident and emergency units after an assault by a partner or former partner and information from IDVA's caseloads, it is estimate that approximately 45% of all domestic abuse is 'known' or visible, whilst the remainder is hidden. Research also highlights that residents with low incomes, high levels of financial stress, low levels of qualifications and in younger age groups (under 30 years of age) are statistically more likely to be affected by domestic abuse. Substance misuse and mental health are also contributory factors².

What we will do

Prevention:

- Deliver targeted multi-agency work and early interventions to tackle domestic abuse in all its forms
- Continue to operate the Supporting Schools initiative by offering schools the opportunity to receive healthy relationship educational programmes
- Education to healthcare professionals
- Domestic Abuse campaigns to be held at key points during the year

Early Help:

- Continue to support the Sanctuary Scheme
- Provide funding for the provision of Independent Sexual Violence Advocates (ISVA's)

² Community Safety Strategic Assessment

- Fulfil our duty in terms of Domestic Homicide Reviews and ensure learning and best practice is shared between partner agencies

Anti-Social Behaviour

Due to the high volume of ASB incidents seen in Stafford Borough CSP (as per across the County) the severe harm it poses to communities and repeat victims and the fact that it is a key priority for residents of Stafford Borough means ASB has been chosen as a strategic priority for Stafford Borough CSP. The combined impact of volume and frequency is causing both capacity and capability issues and impacting on the SCPs ability to deal with the problem whilst maintaining public confidence. In Stafford Borough, 8% of respondents to the Feeling the Difference Survey felt that SAB was a fairly big or very problem in the area. This was similar to the Staffordshire County average.

In the 12 months to the end of August 2016 there were 3,308 incidents of ASB reported to the Police in Stafford Borough, which equates to approximately 25 incidents per 1,000 populations. Compared to the previous 12 months to the end of August 2015, this is a statistically significant increase of 7.5% which compares well to a 14.4% increase across Staffordshire County as a whole. Of these incidents 62% were classified as rowdy and inconsiderate behaviour and a further 17% as neighbour disputes.

National research suggests that no single risk factor or set of risk factors emerge as predictors of future anti-social behaviour but a range of factors interact together and contribute to such patterns of behaviour. Demographic characteristics such as age, race and gender, educational underachievement, poor attendance at school, being excluded from school, socio-economic status, community disadvantage, being abused and witnessing anti-social behaviour within the family are all suggested factors³.

What we will do

Prevention:

- Continue to utilise the Anti-Social Behaviour tools and powers available to us
- Develop initiatives around community tolerance in respect of neighbourhood disputes
- Continue to operate the Supporting Schools initiative by offering schools the opportunity to receive anti-social behaviour and crime related programmes
- Run seasonal anti-social behaviour campaigns such as SPACE
- Run weeks of action and walkabouts in neighbourhoods and in hotspot locations
- Crime Prevention officer to visit McDonalds and Victoria Park to identify if there are any opportunities to reduce anti-social behaviour

³ Community Safety Strategic Assessment

- Work with Youth Service providers to engage with young people in Manor, Western Downs and Highfields areas to seek youth diversions from ASB
- Develop PSPO's to replace Alcohol Restriction Zones to cover our Town Centres and other priority areas
- Commission and support a pilot project around tolerance and perception of crime

Early Help:

- Continue to work with our registered social landlords and other agencies to address emerging trends in Crime and ASB locally
- Provide positive activities for young people
- Utilise the Victim Gateway's Restorative Justice Programme
- Long term problem solving through multi agencies required to address the issue of homelessness in the town with rough sleepers causing ASB and Public Order
- To seek traffic calming measures in Western Downs to reduce and alleviate the use of nuisance vehicles

Alcohol & Mental Health – Cross cutting themes

Stafford Borough CSP recognises the impact that both alcohol and mental health can play as risk factors impacting victims and offenders across their chosen priority areas. As such they have been identified as cross-cutting themes. The below table summarises hospital admissions relating to alcohol and mental health for both Stafford Borough CSP and Staffordshire County.

There were 4,936 admissions to hospital with a mental health diagnosis code from Stafford residents during 2015/2016 at an age standardised rate of 37 per 1,000 population, which is significantly lower than the Staffordshire County age standardised rate of 40 per 1,000 population. In addition there were 1,067 alcohol related admissions from Stafford residents during 2015/16 at an age standardised rate of 7.9 per 1,000 population, which is similar to the Staffordshire County age standardised rate of 7.6 per 1,000 population.

What we will do

Prevention:

- Continue to operate the Supporting Schools initiative by offering schools the opportunity to receive alcohol & substance misuse educational programmes, and information, advice and guidance around mental health
- Continue to work collaboratively with licensing colleagues within Stafford Borough Council and Staffordshire Police
- Support Community Voice – a consultation around health related matters
- Support peer support sessions and smoking cessation

- Community Mental Health Working Group
- Support Mental Health Awareness campaigns
- Support the Student Community Ambassadors

Early Help:

- Support the Community Matron initiative and work in partnership with the scheme
- Support the Housing First project which will see 8 units identified for individuals
- Commission a service to deliver appropriate support to individuals with complex needs in respect of Alcohol and Mental Health

Contact Us

If you have any queries or issues relating to this plan please contact:

policyandpartnership@staffordbc.gov.uk

or write to:

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