

# Report to Safer Neighbourhoods and Active Communities Scrutiny Board

**29 April 2025**

<b>Subject:</b>	Implementation of Sandwell Community Safety Strategy 2022-26
<b>Director:</b>	Executive Director Place Alan Lunt
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## 1 Recommendations

- 1.1 To consider and comment upon the Implementation of the Sandwell Community Safety Strategy 2022- 26.

## 2 Reasons for Recommendations

- 2.1 Sandwell's Community Safety Strategy 2022–2026 is delivered through the Safer Sandwell Partnership Police and Crime Board, which oversees the borough's strategic approach to crime, violence, and anti-social behaviour.
- 2.2 The strategy focuses on three key priorities:
- Preventing violence and exploitation
  - Reducing offending and serious organised crime
  - Preventing crime and anti-social behaviour in neighbourhoods
- 2.3 These priorities are underpinned by cross-cutting commitments to tackling substance misuse and fulfilling the Serious Violence Duty, with a shared emphasis on early intervention and integrated delivery.
- 2.4 The strategy is delivered through three established sub-groups, each with a clear work plan, ensuring that delivery remains flexible, responsive, and aligned to local needs. This enables flexibility to respond to emerging threats and ensures accountability for delivering on statutory and local expectations.

## 3 How does this deliver objectives of the Corporate Plan?

- 3.1 The work of the Safer Sandwell Partnership and its sub-groups directly supports the delivery of all four of Sandwell's strategic priorities, as set out in the Council Plan 2024–2027:

<b>Growing Up in Sandwell</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Community safety interventions help prevent youth violence, criminal exploitation, and early entry into the justice system.</li><li>• Partnership approaches focus on disrupting harm, improving safety in and around schools, and reducing the risk of child criminal and sexual exploitation.</li><li>• Targeted early intervention supports the aim of reducing repeat incidents and long-term vulnerability.</li></ul>
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<b>Living in Sandwell</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Action to tackle anti-social behaviour, knife harm, and public space violence improves safety and confidence in local areas.</li> <li>• Delivery of the Community Safety Strategy strengthens the partnership response to crime, disorder, and exploitation across Sandwell's six towns.</li> <li>• Hate crime prevention and tension monitoring help maintain community stability.</li> </ul>
<b>Healthy in Sandwell</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Reducing harm from domestic abuse, substance misuse, and modern slavery supports public safety and risk management.</li> <li>• Community safety responses are increasingly informed by mental health needs, trauma, and safeguarding risks.</li> <li>• Multi-agency working enables earlier identification and intervention in cases of harm and vulnerability.</li> </ul>
<b>Thriving Economy in Sandwell</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A strong local focus on disrupting organised crime and reducing reoffending contributes to safer environments for business and investment.</li> <li>• Enforcement against drug-related harm, illegal trading, and exploitation in the private rented sector supports community resilience and safety.</li> <li>• Partnership activity helps to protect the borough's high streets, neighbourhoods, and wider economy from crime impact.</li> </ul>
<b>One Council One Team</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Community Safety is delivered through a whole-council approach, with aligned priorities across public health, housing, enforcement, and children's services.</li> <li>• Improved use of shared data, including the enhanced Community Safety Dashboard, enables smarter targeting of prevention and enforcement activity.</li> <li>• Refreshed governance, integrated tasking, and joined-up delivery reflect a one-team culture across council departments and partners.</li> </ul>

## **4 Context and Activities to address Sandwell's key priorities**

- 4.1 Sandwell's Community Safety Strategy (2022–2026) sets out a shared commitment to prevent and reduce crime, violence, exploitation, and anti-social behaviour. It is led by the Safer Sandwell Partnership and delivered through multi-agency collaboration, aligned with national priorities and local intelligence.
- 4.2 Over the past year, delivery has been shaped by the Strategic Assessment, Serious Organised Crime (SOC) profile and statutory duties such as the Serious Violence Duty.
- 4.3 In response, the partnership has strengthened its governance, updated subgroup Terms of Reference, and aligned delivery around three priorities:
  - Preventing violence and exploitation
  - Reducing reoffending and serious organised crime
  - Tackling neighbourhood crime and anti-social behaviour
- 4.4 Operationally, the Borough Tasking model has recently been reviewed and refocussed on evidence and intelligence driven approaches to address those issues impacting our communities.
- 4.5 To support earlier identification and intervention, the partnership has strengthened its performance infrastructure, including the development of a new Community Safety Dashboard. This tool allows partners to drill down into data by location, type, and cohort — enabling more targeted responses and upstream prevention of violence, exploitation and anti-social behaviour.
- 4.6 The partnership will continue to target harm hotspots, tackle vulnerability-linked exploitation, and improve confidence through visible prevention, targeted enforcement, and stronger community engagement.

### **Priority 1: The Prevention of Violence and Exploitation (PoVE)**

- 4.7 Sandwell continues to deliver a joined-up response to violence and exploitation, built on prevention, partnership and place-based enforcement. The PoVE Board brings together local and regional partners to reduce serious violence, tackle hidden harms like modern slavery, and strengthen safeguarding across the system. In 2023–24,

the focus was on improving strategic alignment, embedding trauma-informed and community-led practice, and using insight to drive early intervention.

## **What we did**

- Delivered the Serious Violence Needs Assessment (SNA) and adopted the regional Serious Violence Strategy framework.
- Deployed early intervention and hotspot-based youth engagement to prevent unrest and summer disorder.
- Embedded Operation Guardian and visible patrols across high-risk areas.
- Funded youth outreach and mentoring programmes via the Violence Reduction Partnership (VRP) grant, with over 4,900 young people reached.
- Launched the Knife Angel Campaign and began consultation on a local Knife Harm Strategy.
- Finalised the Sexual Assault and Abuse Needs Assessment, with system alignment underway.
- Progressed multi-agency modern slavery activity, with 147 location disruptions and 222 concerns reported.
- Maintained multi-agency Prevent oversight, integrating safeguarding and extremist risk monitoring.
- Sustained Sandwell's commitment to safe accommodation and Multi Agency Risk Assessment Conference (MARAC) improvements with reduced repeat domestic abuse referrals.

## **Impact**

- 22% reduction in serious youth violence, the biggest fall in the West Midlands.
- 5000 young people accessed prevention activity funded via the VRP grant.
- 10183 DA incidents recorded – the lowest in 4 years, down by 517 compared to 2022/23.
- Over 2000 victims supported by Independent Domestic Abuse Advisors (IDVA) services, and over 100 via Independent Sexual Violence Advisors (ISVA's) – helping people feel safer and heard.
- 247 modern slavery concerns reported,

- 147 disruption actions taken against modern slavery – with joint visits and referrals across sectors.
- 91 professionals trained on rape and sexual assault, helping embed trauma-informed practice.
- Over 1081 people trained to recognise signs of modern slavery – building frontline response capacity.

## **Priority 2: Reducing Offending, Reoffending and Serious Organised Crime (RRSOC)**

4.8 Sandwell continues to implement a multi-agency approach to reduce offending, reoffending and serious organised crime. The RRSOC Board has strengthened offender pathways, embedded Integrated Offender Management, and enhanced disruption of serious and organised crime. The focus remains on high-harm individuals, early intervention, and coordinated enforcement – aligning with national probation reform, the Serious Violence Duty and West Midlands Reducing Reoffending Plan.

### **4.9 Key Achievements (2024–2025)**

#### **What we did**

- Embedded a new Integrated Offender Management (IOM) system with clear offender cohorts and monthly performance tracking.
- Expanded use of civil powers including closure orders and tenancy action to disrupt drug markets and high-harm behaviour.
- Piloted Through the Gate mentoring and launched the Choices resettlement programme to support young people post-custody.
- Delivered trauma-informed interventions for care-experienced young people and those at risk of exploitation.
- Coordinated Operation Guardian and County Lines Intensification activity, targeting mapped OCGs and drug-related harm.
- Strengthened multi-agency panels around domestic abuse perpetrators and youth violence risks.
- Delivered the Community Accommodation Service Tier 3 (CAS3) to reduce homelessness and support stability post-prison.
- Launched a DV programme for 16–17s and integrated healthy relationships work into YJS pathways.
- Tackled disproportionality through focused data analysis and the Young Futures Prevention Panel.

- Used public health models to join up criminal justice, health, housing, and education responses around high-risk cohorts.

## **Impact**

- 85% accommodation at 3 months for individuals on probation.
- Referrals into commissioned support services increased, with positive feedback from participants.
- Strong multi-agency response to County Lines, with clear links to safeguarding and exploitation panels.
- Active monthly data tracking of IOM shows Sandwell is performing above regional average on key outcomes.
- DV and stalking outcome rates improving, with local focus on police performance and CPS processes.
- Active monitoring, multi-agency interventions and disruption of eight mapped OCGs with ongoing intelligence sharing and tactical enforcement.

## **Priority 3: Preventing Crime & Anti-Social Behaviour in our Neighbourhoods**

- 4.10 Borough Tasking plays a critical role in coordinating Sandwell's place-based response to crime, anti-social behaviour (ASB), and community tensions. As a sub-group of the Safer Sandwell Partnership (SSP), it ensures that persistent issues and emerging threats are addressed through monthly multi-agency tasking meetings, guided by data and community intelligence.

### **What we did**

- Refreshed the Terms of Reference and membership to ensure Borough Tasking functions as a strategic enabler of community safety priorities.
- Established clear alignment with town-based tasking groups and the fortnightly Intervention and Prevention Meeting, which targets high-risk, high-impact, and repeat demand cases.
- Delivered focused multi-agency work on youth violence, repeat ASB locations, and emerging community tensions.
- Used police and council data to escalate cases where issues could not be resolved locally, ensuring proportionate and persistent response.

- Integrated findings from the Strategic Needs Assessment and resident feedback to shape local tasking priorities.
- Supported the review and renewal of PSPOs, based on public consultation and hotspot mapping.

## **Impact**

- Improved case resolution for complex community issues, with better coordination between frontline services and strategic boards.
- Clearer escalation and accountability routes for persistent demand, linking operational concerns with strategic oversight.
- Stronger use of shared intelligence, enabling earlier intervention around repeat locations and vulnerable individuals.

### **4.11 Conclusion & Moving Forward**

4.12 The Safer Sandwell Partnership Police and Crime Board (SSPPCB) retains statutory responsibility, under the 1998 Crime and Disorder Act and its subsequent amendments, for setting the strategic direction of community safety in the borough. The 2022–2026 Community Safety Strategy provides the framework for partnership delivery, aligned to evidence, statutory duties, and local priorities. This report provides an annual update on progress, challenges, and system-wide activity.

4.13 Over the past year, the partnership has significantly strengthened its governance, sharpened its focus on early intervention and place-based response, and embedded cross-cutting priorities across all delivery groups. The updated Terms of Reference for each board, the annual deep dive programme, and the development of an all-age forward plan provide a clear structure for moving from strategy to delivery.

4.14 Priority activity for 2025–26 will include:

- Refreshing the local response to the Serious Violence Duty, launching Sandwell's Serious Violence Strategy, and developing a new Knife Harm Strategy.
- Implementation of the Sexual Assault and Abuse Needs Assessment and alignment with the regional VAWG strategy.
- Continued rollout of modern slavery disruption activity and development of the All-Age Exploitation Strategy.



- Embedding of the Young Futures Prevention Panel and expansion of trauma-informed approaches across youth and adult services.
- Integration of Prevent transition and support for wider reforms including the national review of Community Safety Partnerships.

4.15 The Partnership will continue to deliver against its core vision: ensuring that the communities of Sandwell feel safe, protected, and confident in their homes and neighbourhoods. This will be achieved through a sustained commitment to prevention, early intervention, community engagement, and multi-agency enforcement.

## 5 Implications

<b>Resources:</b>	The Community Safety Strategy is delivered through the alignment of core partner resources across the Safer Sandwell Partnership. Additional funding from the Violence Reduction Partnership (VRP), Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner (OPCC), and Home Office has supported targeted prevention, enforcement, and community engagement activity. No new financial or staffing pressures arise from this report.
<b>Legal and Governance:</b>	The Safer Sandwell Partnership Police and Crime Board fulfils its legal responsibilities under the Crime and Disorder Act 1998, Domestic Abuse Act 2021, and Police, Crime, Sentencing and Courts Act 2022 (Serious Violence Duty). Governance has been strengthened through updated Terms of Reference, ensuring compliance with statutory duties, improved oversight, and alignment with the council's constitutional framework.
<b>Risk:</b>	Community safety is a statutory responsibility and central to public confidence and wellbeing. Risks are managed through established multi-agency frameworks, including early identification of threat, harm and vulnerability. Failure to act on key issues such as serious violence, exploitation or persistent ASB would significantly undermine community confidence, cohesion, and local resilience.
<b>Equality:</b>	An Equality Impact Assessment (EIA) was undertaken during development of the 2022–26 Strategy and is due to be refreshed to reflect evolving priorities. Partnership activity actively seeks to reduce inequalities, tackle

	disproportionality in justice outcomes, and ensure inclusive and accessible services for all protected groups.
<b>Health and Wellbeing:</b>	There is a well-established link between safety and health outcomes. Reducing exposure to crime, violence, and exploitation contributes to improved mental health, reduced trauma, and better life chances. The strategy prioritises trauma-informed practice, early intervention, and integrated safeguarding across all age groups.
<b>Social Value</b>	Community safety interventions support stronger neighbourhoods, active citizenship, and opportunities for residents to participate in local solutions. Work such as Safer 6, targeted youth outreach, and local tasking groups enhances civic pride, volunteering, and local visibility of services.
<b>Climate Change:</b>	Reducing ASB, environmental crime and fear of crime contributes to cleaner, greener and more inclusive neighbourhoods. Improved safety in public places supports sustainable travel, the use of green spaces, and the council's wider place-based ambitions for a safer, healthier Sandwell.
<b>Corporate Parenting:</b>	The strategy includes a strong focus on preventing youth exploitation and offending. This contributes directly to the Council's corporate parenting duties, ensuring that children in care and care leavers are supported through coordinated safeguarding, youth justice and education pathways.

## 6 Appendices

### Appendix 1 - Sandwell Community Safety Strategy 2022-26