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**Children, Culture and Communities Scrutiny Committee** 4 March 2025

Report of Director of Environment Transport and Planning

**Safer York Partnership Annual Report**

**Summary**

1. This report is the annual report for Safer York Partnership and covers the priorities contained within the Community Safety for the period 2023-2026. The Community Safety Strategy was developed and approved by Safer York Partnership in 2023, refreshed in 2024 and reflects the community safety priorities identified through data analysis of crime patterns, the statutory duties for which the partnership has governance responsibility and community safety issues which impact most significantly on communities and quality of life.
  - i. Safer York Partnership is the Statutory Community Safety Partnership created under the Crime and Disorder Act 1998 covering the City of York. It is comprised of senior representatives from City of York Council, North Yorkshire Police, North Yorkshire Fire & Rescue, Probation, Office of the Police Fire and Crime Commissioner, NHS Humber and North Yorkshire Integrated Care Board, Job Centre Plus, York CVS, Make It York and York BID. It is currently chaired by Supt Ed Haywood-Noble, Area Commander, North Yorkshire Police with City of York Council Director Pauline Stuchfield as Deputy Chair. Its role is to facilitate partnership working to deliver the priorities set out in the three year Community Safety Strategy.

- ii. The Priorities within the Community Safety Strategy refresh 2024 (attached at Appendix A) are:
  - a. Keeping the City Centre Safe
  - b. Counter Terrorism: Protect, Prepare, Prevent
  - c. Domestic Abuse
  - d. Safe and Supported Communities
  - e. Serious Organised Crime: County Lines, Modern Slavery, Exploitation
  - f. Serious Violence
- iii. The Scorecard for Safer York Partnership is attached at Annex B.

## **2. Keeping the City Centre Safe**

- i. This Strategic priority is led by York BID. This reflects the work that the BID lead in relation to Purple Flag and their Safe and Secure work programme.
- ii. York has retained its Purple Flag status and assessors have been impressed with the partnership working that contributes to making York a safe place for its residents, businesses and visitors.
- iii. Whilst the unique layout of the city as a mix of residential and business premises within a compact area does create some tensions, these are addressed through the partnership working to create an environment that is attractive and safe for all. Examples include the family friendly days organised through the BID and the many events offered by Make It York. Community Safety is at the heart of the work of York Safety Advisory Group with safety planning a major factor in the consideration and debriefing of major events.
- iv. The BID rangers have community safety accreditation powers and work closely with the Police and City of York Council's Neighbourhood Enforcement Team to provide visible reassurance and work together to deter antisocial behaviour and aggressive begging on the streets.

- v. Partnership working takes place with the Police, City of York Council, BID Rangers and Support Services to co-ordinate support for those who are homeless and vulnerable.
- vi. Over the summer period in 2024, a new partnership campaign 'Choose Respect Not Regrets' was launched with visible branding across the city. The campaign outlines the importance of responsible behaviour in the city. Campaign themes include anti-littering, using respectful language, drinking in moderation, river safety, rail travel, public urination and street noise. The messaging can be found on shop wraps, bollards, planters, cigarette bins, adverts, buses, and toilets, starting from York Rail Station and continuing throughout the city centre.

### 3. **Counter Terrorism: Protect, Prepare, Prevent**

#### i. **Protect and Prepare**

The current National Threat Level is SUBSTANTIAL meaning that an attack is likely. York Protect and Prepare Group meets quarterly and delivers an action plan aimed at increasing awareness and vigilance including undertaking risk assessments specific to the threat of terrorism and working in partnership to mitigate identified risk.

- ii. The Government is in the final stages of legislating for a stronger response to terrorist threat through the Protect Duty (Martyn's Law). The duty includes lessons learnt from the Manchester Arena attack and a requirement for venues to be able to demonstrate that they have taken proportionate steps to protect against a terrorist attack. It will follow a tiered model linked to activity that takes place at a location and its capacity aimed to prevent undue burden on businesses.
- iii. York's work on Protect and Prepare continues to be highlighted as National Good Practice by the Home Office and by Counter Terrorism Policing. In January 2024 York Minster hosted a major live exercise with all Emergency Services based on a scenario involving a Terrorist Attack. The aim of the exercise was to test the planning and measures that the Minster have put in place to both mitigate risk but also to test the response of all partners in the event of an attack taking place. Further exercises will be carried out in the city as part of the response to the ongoing threat from Terrorism.

- iv. Over the Christmas period two attacks took place where vehicles were used as a weapon: the first on 21 December in a Christmas Market in Magdeburg Germany and the second on New Years Day in New Orleans. These attacks demonstrate that the threat continues and assessments indicate that lone offenders and small groups continue to pose the greatest threat of carrying out attacks with little to no warning.

v. **Prevent**

The Counter Terrorism and Security Act 2015 contains a duty on specified authorities to safeguard individuals from becoming terrorists or supporting terrorism. This is managed strategically through a Prevent Partnership Board that operates across York and North Yorkshire with an action plan executed at local level by the York Local Prevent Delivery Group. The process is supported by a Channel Panel within top tier (Unitary and County) Authorities whereby referrals are made when individuals are highlighted to the police as potentially at risk of being radicalised. The Prevent Partnership Board also reports to the North Yorkshire Police CONTEST Board.

- vi. York's Channel Panel meets monthly. Referrals to Channel have increased and there are currently three cases open to Channel.
- vii. The Prevent Local Delivery Group meets monthly and is made up of a range of services from across the Local Authority, Fire and Rescue, Police, Higher Education Providers, the Armed Forces, Probation and Health. The Prevent Risk Assessment for York has recently been agreed with the Home Office and the annual benchmarking under the Prevent Duty will take place during March.
- viii. Following the attack last year in Southport, the Prevent Programme is subject to more scrutiny. The York Local Delivery Group continues to ensure that all partners are working together to deliver training and awareness and understand the importance of raising concerns through the Channel Process.

#### **4. Domestic Abuse**

The Domestic Abuse Act 2021 places a statutory duty on tier one local authorities for the delivery of support to victims of domestic abuse and their children in safe accommodation and provides clarity over governance and accountability. Strategic responsibility for Domestic Abuse within City of York Council is held by the Public Health Team and delivery is through the York Domestic Abuse Board reporting to Safer York Partnership.

- i. The York Domestic Abuse Strategy Delivery Plan places early intervention and prevention as the focus of partnership working. Work includes education and training across all front line services and equipping professionals with the knowledge to recognise signs and indicators of domestic abuse and particularly to understand the needs of seldom heard and marginalised groups. The group also ensures that specialist support services commissioned across both York and North Yorkshire are inclusive and accessible and that safe accommodation is available to meet the needs of victims. This Partnership also continues to work with services to develop pathways and interventions to work with perpetrators.

#### **5. Safe and Supported Communities**

This priority acknowledges the impact that crime and antisocial behaviour have on communities and quality of life. It includes ensuring that the safeguarding needs of victims are met through the inclusion of a range of support services and community connectors in the problem solving process.

- i. Anti-social behaviour is addressed through an escalating approach using education and support to promote behaviour change, with enforcement as the last resort for the most serious cases that cause the highest level of threat and risk to individuals or communities. A joint North Yorkshire Police and City of York Council team make up the Community Safety Hub, working together to ensure that where enforcement action is required, it is dealt with effectively and efficiently through collaborative work.

- ii. Often serious anti-social behaviour is accompanied by wider criminal activity and associations and is very often underpinned by complex mental and physical health conditions. Close collaborative working between City of York Council Housing, Social Care teams, neighbourhood policing teams and the Community Safety Hub takes place through monthly community harm meetings. These are designed to identify issues early and put multi-agency measures in place to provide the relevant support and response to address the needs of both victims and perpetrators of serious anti-social behaviour.
- iii. Hate Crime is managed through the York Hate Crime Partnership. The Partnership includes organisations whose work supports those communities with protected characteristics under the Hate Crime legislation (Race, Religion, Disability, Sexual Orientation, Transgender Identity alongside representatives from City of York Council, North Yorkshire Police and the universities and colleges. The group reports to the Safer York Partnership Board and the North Yorkshire Inclusive Communities Commissioning Group.
- iv. Work to address Hate Crime is delivered collaboratively between the York & North Yorkshire Community Safety Teams and North Yorkshire Police Hate Crime Team.
- v. The following actions have been delivered through York Hate Crime Partnership:
  - The City Centre Choose Respect Not Regrets campaign in collaboration with the York BID.
  - Closer working with the Universities and Colleges to share relevant trends in reporting. This includes the *All About Respect* initiative that aims to improve dialogue with students and young people around healthy relationships, sexual harassment and violence.
  - A multi agency Disability Hate Crime sub group has been established to ensure this complex area of Hate Crime receives the focus it requires. As a result, York Disability Rights Forum are now members of the Yorkshire and Humberside CPS Hate Crime Scrutiny Committee. Links have also been established with Dr Leah Burch from Liverpool Hope University. She is planning a new research project on Disability Hate Crime which York's group hope to contribute to.

- vi. Over the next 12 months, York Hate Crime Partnership have agreed three main areas of focus:
- Agree a new operating model for Third Party Hate Crime Reporting Centres
  - Roll-out accredited Hate Crime Champions Training
  - A York & North Yorkshire Hate Crime Conference taking place on 15 October at Priory Street Centre as part of Hate Crime Awareness week

6. **Serious Organised Crime including County Lines, Exploitation and Modern Slavery**

- i. Serious organised crime (SOC) whilst often associated with regional, national or international criminals, impacts significantly on local communities. Organised crime groups will deploy intimidation tactics, exploit individuals and use violence for unlawful gain. A Serious Organised Crime Board for York and North Yorkshire focuses on the National Serious Organised Crime Strategy and delivers across both Local Authority areas. It is supported by a multi-agency disruption panel which brings together intelligence from a range of partners to disrupt the most prolific groups operating locally.
- ii. A Monthly multi-agency Serious Organised Crime Group has been established for York to particularly focus on the increase in County Lines activity in the city. County Lines is where illegal drugs are transported from one area to another, often across police force and local authority boundaries, usually by children or vulnerable people who are coerced by gangs. The 'County Line' is a mobile phone line used to take the orders of drugs. Importing areas (areas where drugs are taken to) often report an increase in levels of violence and weapons related crime. Because of this it is crucial that police and partners work together to disrupt these groups are reduce the threat harm and risk they pose to vulnerable people within the community. The monthly SOC group also links through its membership to the Multiagency, Child Exploitation Disruption Meetings.

- iii. Clear Hold Build is a Home Office developed strategy to help police forces tackle Serious and Organised Crime. The Clear and Hold phases are a targeted police response to disrupt criminal activity and maintain control of the area to prevent future escalation. The Build phase engages wider partners and the community themselves to work together to reduce the risk of crime re-emerging. York is delivering this initiative in the Clifton area through the work of a multi-agency approach whereby partners work together to maintain a tactical response to crime and anti-social behaviour in the area supported by a more strategic plan to provide ongoing support to the community.

## **7. Serious Violence**

- i. The Serious Violence Duty has been in place since January 2023, introduced under the Police, Crime, Sentencing and Courts Act 2022. The duty requires partners to work together to share information and collaborate on interventions to prevent and reduce serious violence within communities.
- ii. A Serious Violence Duty Working Group has been established across York and North Yorkshire by the Office of the Police Fire and Crime Commissioner (OPFCC) involving all key partners in both Local Authority areas. The group has overseen the production of a Joint Strategic Needs Assessment, highlighting the key areas of concern, patterns and trends and the drafting of a Serious Violence Strategy 2024-29 to address them through a multiagency approach. Funding has been made available by the Home Office to support this work and as administered through the OPFCC through a bidding process to support projects aligned to the strategy. This work also links across to other strands of the community safety strategy including Hate Crime, Violence Against Women and Girls and Keeping the City Centre Safe (violence linked to the Nighttime economy).



## Council Plan

8. The Community Safety Strategy links to the following core commitments within the Council Plan:
- **Equalities and Human Rights:** Working with all communities to ensure that residents, Businesses and visitors are able to feel safe within the City.
  - **Affordability:** Working closely with the most disadvantaged to ensure that victims of crime and antisocial behaviour are supported and that a holistic approach to problem solving is delivered with education and early intervention at its heart.
  - **Health:** Working in partnership to address health inequalities and ensure that communities and individuals are supported to address their health needs where it is impacted by crime and antisocial behaviour

## Implications

9. There are no implications in relation to this report which requires no formal decisions as it is a report for information only.

## Risk Management

10. There are no identified risks relevant to this report.

## Conclusions

11. The Police and Justice Act 2006 introduced a clear role for Overview and Scrutiny Committees in overseeing the work of Community Safety Partnerships and their constituent partners. Under the council's scrutiny arrangements bi-annual performance reports from Safer York Partnership are presented to the Scrutiny and Policy Committee.

## Recommendation

12. Members are asked to note the information relating to delivery of the Community Safety Strategy.

Reason: To update Members on the performance of the Safer York Partnership and facilitate contribution to development of future strategy.

## Contact Details

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**Report Approved** ☒ **Date** 20 February 2025

**Wards Affected:**

**All** ☒

**For further information please contact the author of the report**

## Background Papers

Annex A: Community Safety Strategy refresh 2024  
Annex B: Safer York Partnership Score Card

## Abbreviations

CYC - City of York Council  
NYP - North Yorkshire Police  
BID - Business Improvement District  
ASB - Anti-Social Behaviour  
NEO - Neighbourhood Enforcement Officer  
NYCC - North Yorkshire County Council  
PSPO - Public Space Protection Orders  
OPFCC – Office of the Police Fire and Crime Commissioner  
HVM - hostile vehicle mitigation  
CONTEST – Government response to Counter Terrorism  
SAG – Safety Advisory Group  
IDAS - Independent Domestic Abuse Service