



**Report for: Cabinet**

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<b>Date of Meeting:</b>	14 of March
<b>Subject:</b>	Serious Violence Strategy 2024 - 2027
<b>Key Decision:</b>	Yes
<b>Responsible Officer:</b>	Shumaila Dar, Assistant Director of Corporate Strategy
<b>Portfolio Holder:</b>	Cllr Anjana Patel Portfolio Holder for Highways, Infrastructure and Community Safety
<b>Exempt:</b>	No
<b>Decision subject to Call-in:</b>	Yes
<b>Wards affected:</b>	All
<b>Enclosures:</b>	Appendix 1 – Draft Harrow Serious Violence Strategy Appendix 2 – Serious Violence Strategic Needs Assessment Appendix 3 – Equality Impact Assessment

## **Section 1 – Summary and Recommendations**

This report contains the Serious Violence Strategy 2024 – 2027 for the borough. This Strategy has been designed through extensive consultation with our communities, partners and stakeholders and has been reviewed by Harrow’s Community Safety Partnership (Safer Harrow) prior to preparing the final draft contained within this report. To confirm, Harrow has met their statutory duty and have published a draft version of the Serious Violence Strategy on Harrows website on the 31<sup>st</sup> January 2024.

### **Recommendations: That**

1. Harrow’s Serious Violence Strategy be approved so a final version of the Serious Violence Strategy can be published
2. It be agreed that each annual review falls under the annual consideration of the Community Safety Strategy

### **Reason: (for recommendations)**

This strategy is a statutory requirement in accordance with the Police, Crime, Sentencing and Courts Act 2022 (the 2022 Act).

## **Section 2 – Report**

### **Introductory paragraph**

The report attached as an Appendix presents the Harrow Serious Violence Strategy 2024 - 2027.

The 2022 Act creates a duty for specified authorities (local authorities, probation, youth justice, integrated care board, local health board, police and fire and rescue service) to plan to exercise their functions to prevent and reduce serious violence in their area. This includes the need to identify the kinds of and causes of serious violence and prepare and implement a strategy for exercising functions to prevent and reduce serious violence.

There is a statutory responsibility to consult educational authorities, prison and youth offending authorities within the local area. Through extensive consultation, active engagement with local communities, and capturing the perspectives of young people, we have access to first-hand understanding of their concerns and the actions they desire to enhance the quality of their neighbourhoods.

A summary of the consultation processes undertaken and feedback received is below. A detailed list can be found in Appendix 1 (pg. 22):

- Serious Violence Youth Survey 2023 on the MyHarrow Talk platform

- Fortnightly Task & Finish group sessions with all statutory partners (June 2023 – November 2023)
- 1 to 1 consultation with all statutory partners and Harrows voluntary and community sector organisations who work closely within this field
- Town Centre Consultation (in partnership with NOMAD) with Harrows Voluntary and Community Sector Organisations, young people and residents to discuss their concerns around Serious Youth Violence
- Safer Spaces Survey 2023 captures concerns of women and girls in Harrow and helps the council identify areas of concerns within the borough.

These concerns, along with insights gained from lessons learned, successes, and best practices from previous strategies, have significantly contributed to the latest strategic assessment. This ensures that the priorities we have identified are shaped by the input of Harrow's residents.

Whilst there is a statutory duty to prepare and publish a strategy, there is an element of flexibility within the legislation to take account of local need, including in relation to defining what serious violence is in the context of Harrow. It was agreed at the Safer Harrow Board in 2023, that Harrow would adopt the London guidance definition of Serious Violence (See Appendix 1). The statutory guidance confirms that there is flexibility for the specified authorities to determine how to work together, including whether to utilise existing multi-agency arrangements. Through the analysis of the Strategic Needs Assessment and the consultation findings, the following priorities have been agreed:

- To reduce Serious Violent Crime with young people below the age of 25 within Harrow
- To tackle Violence against Women and Girls
- To encourage a Community Approach to tackling Serious Youth Violence in Harrow (under 25)

The evidence/performance measures used to arrive at these priorities are:

- Demographic Data (Census 2021, GLA population projections)
- Police Data (Anti-Social Behaviour Call Outs, Sanction Detection)
- Youth Offending Data
- Health Care Data (A&E Attendance and Hospital Admissions)
- Social Care Data
- Education Data (DfE)
- Public Health Profiles
- Office for National Statistics
- GIS Mapping
- Young Persons Insights – October 2023 Survey on the MyHarrow Talk Platform circulated to all 17 Secondary Schools/Colleges in Harrow with 983 young people taking part.

In June 2023, the Community Safety Strategy (2023 – 2026) was approved by Cabinet. This strategy outlined six priority areas for Harrow which are highlighted below:

- Tackling and reducing Violence Against Women and Girls (VAWG)
- Reducing incidents of burglary / motor vehicle crime / robbery
- Reducing the number of violent incidents in the borough
- Tackling and reducing offences and harm caused by drugs.
- Tackling Hate Crime
- Perception of Crime

The Safer Harrow Partnership will undertake a monitoring role for the Harrow Serious Violence Strategy, The specified authorities must collectively keep the strategy under review and from time to time prepare and implement a revised strategy.

To embed a co-ordinated and effective approach to reducing incidents of Serious Violence in the borough, the Safer Harrow Partnership will undertake a monitoring role and be leading on the implementation of the Serious Violence Strategy. The progress of this strategy and the objectives set out within it will be reviewed quarterly through the Community Safety Delivery Plan via the Safer Harrow Board, which is chaired by the Portfolio Holder.

More specifically, the Serious Violence Strategy priority areas will feed into three workstreams within the Community Safety Strategy Delivery Plan:

**Workstream 2: Tackling violence against women and girls (VAWG)**

**Workstream 4: Reducing the number of violent incidents on the Borough**

**Workstream 5: Perception of crime and anti-social behaviour and hate crime**

The Senior Responsible Officers for the workstreams detailed in bold above will provide progress reports to the Safer Harrow Board every quarter and will make recommendations on revisions to the strategy (if any). Alongside the Community Safety Strategy, the Serious Violence Strategy will report to Cabinet on an annual basis (2024 – 2027) to provide progress updates and recommended revisions (if any). In accordance with the statutory duty an annual review of the strategy will be undertaken.

### **Options considered.**

The Council has a statutory duty to prepare and publish a strategy alongside other specified authorities. There is an element of flexibility within the legislation to take account of local needs, including in relation to defining what serious violence is in the context of Harrow. The statutory guidance confirms that there is flexibility for the specified authorities to determine how to work together, including whether to utilise existing multi-agency arrangements. The Council has chosen to use the existing Safer Harrow Partnership, although aspects of the Strategy and the actions sitting beneath it will be relevant to other multi-agency partnerships, including the health and wellbeing board, multi-agency risk assessment conference, domestic abuse local partnership

board, multi-agency public protection arrangements and multi-agency safeguarding partnerships.

### Ward Councillors' comments

Not applicable as the strategy relates to all wards.

### Risk Management Implications

Risks included on corporate or directorate risk register. **Yes**

Separate risk register in place? **No**

The relevant risks contained in the register are attached/summarised below.  
**N/A**

The following key risks should be taken into account when agreeing the recommendations in this report:

<b>Risk Description</b>	<b>Mitigations</b>	<b>RAG Status</b>
<b>Failing to meet the legal duties under the 2022 Act and not publishing the final version of the Serious Violence Strategy</b>	This risk can be mitigated by approving the strategy, as per the above recommendation.	<b>Green</b>
<b>The Serious Violence Strategy fails to deliver the Council's priority of a safer borough</b>	The actions in the strategy were identified and formulated through consultation with the appropriate Portfolio Holder and relevant council officers (Public Health, Youth Offending Team, Children Services, Community Safety) and specified and responsible authorities (Harrow Probation, NHS, Transport Police, Metropolitan Police, London Fire Brigade). This included an assessment of financial viability and timescales for deliverability. Delivery against the Serious Violence Strategy will be routinely reviewed, and progress reported quarterly, enabling adjustments or remedial action to be taken.	<b>Green</b>

## **Procurement Implications**

There are no direct procurement implications arising from the recommendations set out in this report. However, any procurement that is required to deliver the actions detailed in the Community Safety Strategy will be conducted consistent with the Contract Procedure Rules and the Public Contract Regulations 2015 (PCR15) or the Procurement Act 2023 which is due to replace the PCR15 in October 2024. Procurement activity required as a result of the recommendations set out in this report will be supported by the Corporate Procurement Team.

## **Legal Implications**

The 2022 Act creates a serious violence duty requiring partnership working with local authorities, police, fire and rescue authorities and others, to work together. This involves partners sharing information, intelligence and knowledge to prevent and reduce serious violence. Essentially, this means the requirement to conduct a strategic needs assessment and prepare and implement a strategy, which should be reviewed on an annual basis.

Violence is defined as including domestic abuse, sexual offences, violence against property and threats of violence, but does not extend to terrorism. When determining whether violence amounts to serious violence, account must be taken of the maximum penalty, impact of the violence on any victim, prevalence of violence in the area and impact of the violence on the local community.

Prior to approving a strategy, the specified authorities must ensure that each educational authority, prison authority and youth custody authority for the area are consulted. A strategy may specify an action to be carried out by any of these responsible bodies.

The existing duties of partners forming the Safer Harrow Partnership have been extended to include formulating and implementing a strategy for preventing people from becoming involved in serious violence in the area and reducing instances of serious violence in the area.

Section 17 of the Crime and Disorder Act 1998 has been amended to require the partner authorities to exercise their functions with due regard to consider the effect of and need to prevent serious violence in the local area.

## **Financial Implications**

There are no direct financial implications of developing the Serious Violence Strategy. The Council will receive £79,000 over three years for discharging the Serious Violence Strategy and delivering the priorities within it. There are existing budgets within the council that are directly and indirectly attributed to aspects of the delivery of this Strategy.

## **Equalities implications / Public Sector Equality Duty**

The Public Sector Equality Duty (PSED) under section 149 of the Equality Act 2010 requires the Council, when exercising its functions, to have due regard to:

- I. the need to eliminate discrimination, harassment, victimisation, and any other conduct that is prohibited by or under the Equality Act 2010;
- II. the need to advance equality of opportunity between persons who share protected characteristics and those who do not, and;
- III. foster good relations between those who have protected characteristics and those who do not.

Note: 'Protected characteristics' are age, sex, race, disability, sexual orientation, marriage and civil partnerships, religion or belief, pregnancy and maternity and gender reassignment.

The Council is committed to all of the above in the provision, procurement and commissioning of its services, and the employment of its workforce. In addition, the Council is also committed to improving the quality of life and wellbeing for all Harrow residents in respect of socioeconomics and health determinants.

The Serious Violence Strategy recognises that women and girls are disproportionately affected by Domestic Abuse and Violence Against Women and Girls and that men, boys and non-binary people are also affected by issues which encompasses Domestic Abuse and Violence Against Women and Girls. Therefore, a key priority area within this strategy is tackling Violence against Women and Girls via a coordinated community response that focuses on preventative initiatives and programmes and more effective reporting and referral pathways.

The Serious Violence Strategy does specifically address recognising the disproportionate over representation of Black Caribbean Young men within the Criminal Justice System as a whole and within London and indeed within Harrow. One of the priorities in the strategy is to attempt to find ways to seek to address this disproportionality by encouraging a holistic partnership approach focusing on early intervention and prevention. It also highlights the importance of taking a community approach to tackle Serious Youth Violence which involves:

- Greater engagement and collaboration with our Voluntary and Community Sector as well as our residents to shape Harrow's strategy going forward.
- Greater involvement of young people within local violence prevention work
- Working with young people to create opportunities for development and to support positive aspirations and role models.

The Equality Impact Assessment is appended at Appendix 3.

## **Council Priorities**

Please identify how the decision sought delivers this priority.

**1. A borough that is clean and safe**

This strategy supports the council's priority of a safe and clean borough as it outlines how Harrows Community Safety Partnership can better work together to tackle Serious Youth Violence and ultimately make the Borough a safer place for all.

## **Section 3 - Statutory Officer Clearance**

**Statutory Officer: Jessie Man**

Signed on behalf of the Chief Financial Officer

**Date: 14.02.24**

**Statutory Officer: Sarah Wilson**

Signed on behalf of the Monitoring Officer

**Date: 15.02.24**

**Chief Officer: Alex Dewsnap**

Signed by the Managing Director

**Date: 16.02.24**

**Head of Procurement: Nimesh Mehta**

Signed by the Head of Procurement

**Date: 12.02.24**

**Head of Internal Audit: Neale Burns**

Signed on behalf of the Head of Internal Audit

**Date: 13.02.24**

**Has the Portfolio Holder(s) been consulted? Yes**

## **Mandatory Checks**

**Ward Councillors notified: NO, as it impacts on all Wards**

**EqIA carried out: YES**

**EqIA cleared by: Jennifer Rock 14.02.24**



## **Section 4 - Contact Details and Background Papers**

**Contact:** Janice Noble, Head of Community Safety  
[Janice.noble@harrow.gov.uk](mailto:Janice.noble@harrow.gov.uk)

**Background Papers:** None

**Call-in waived by the Chair of Overview and Scrutiny Committee:** NO