

Report to:	CLIMATE CHANGE AND ENVIRONMENT SCRUTINY COMMITTEE
Relevant Officer:	John Greenbank, Senior Democratic Governance Adviser
Date of meeting:	7 February 2023

SERIOUS VIOLENCE DUTY SCRUTINY REVIEW PANEL

1.0 Purpose of the report

1.1 To consider an update on the meeting of the Serious Violence Duty Scrutiny Review Panel held on 6 December 2023.

2.0 Recommendation(s)

2.1 To consider the update, the recommendations made and identify any further work to be undertaken regarding the Serious Violence Duty.

3.0 Reason for recommendation(s)

3.1 To ensure the Committee has an overview of ongoing work.

3.2 Is the recommendation contrary to a plan or strategy approved by the Council? No

3.3 Is the recommendation in accordance with the Council's approved budget? Yes

4.0 Other alternative options to be considered

4.1 None.

5.0 Council priority

5.1 The relevant Council priority is:

- 'Communities: Creating stronger communities and increasing resilience'

6.0 Background and key information

6.1 On 6 December 2023 members of the Climate Change and Environment Scrutiny Committee held a scrutiny review panel meeting to consider work to implement the Serious Violence Duty (SVD) by the BSafe Community Safety Partnership in Blackpool. This work was undertaken with the committee's remit as the Council's statutory Crime and Disorder Panel.

6.2 The meeting was chaired by Councillor Simon Cartmell and the following members were present.

Councillor Adrian Hoyle
Councillor Julie Jones

Councillor Laura Marshall

6.3 Also in attendance were Ms Lisa Arnold, Assistant Director Community and Environmental Services (Community and Wellbeing), Ms Jennifer Clayton, Head of Public Protection and Councillor Paula Burdess, Cabinet Member for Community Safety, Street Scene and Neighbourhoods.

6.4 Members heard that the SVD was statutory duty that required councils and local partners to work together to prevent and reduce serious violence. As part of this requirement Blackpool's Community Safety Partnership (CSP), BSafe Blackpool, was in the process of drafting an action plan which would identify the key areas of work needed in relation to the SVD. It was noted that a Pan-Lancashire Strategy was already in place between Lancashire County Council, Blackburn with Darwen Council and Blackpool Council.

6.5 To support the development of an action plan the review panel heard that a strategic needs assessment had been undertaken which had identified the following key themes;

- Strategic Objectives – To ensure the aims of the action plan are clear and achievable, including improving the evaluation of data related to serious violence.
- Prevention – Work to pro-actively prevent instances of serious violence.
- Enforcement – Ensuring enforcement is effective in cases where serious violence has occurred.
- Cultural Transformation

6.6 The main cause of serious violence in Blackpool was reported as being connected to the sale of drugs. The review panel heard that this presented a significant challenge to the Council and its partners, with Blackpool experiencing double the national average for cases of serious violence. Key drivers of the sale of drugs included deprivation in some areas of Blackpool and high levels of domestic violence.

6.7 As part of the CSP's response to the SVD it had been recognised that an innovative approach would be required that combined the use of Police powers and the civil powers possessed by the Council and other members of the partnership in enforcement activities.

6.8 Members of the CSP had also met on 17 November 2023 to hold an SVD workshop. The

outcome of this meeting had been to identified the key areas of work need to implement the SVD, including:

- Improved communications in relation to serious violence. Highlighting the importance of information sharing between partners including lesson learned, the role of local media and the need to develop a communications strategy.
- The need to develop a serious violence directory, allowing better sign-posting of the primary, secondary and tertiary support available.
- Improvement of the information available on the CSP's website.
- The need to develop a serious violence training offer, to allow the sharing of expertise and raise the awareness of the civil powers available to partners. Also to develop training on serious violence for schools.
- Evaluation of enforcement actions through Enforcement Intervention Tracking, to ensure interventions were effective and highlight areas of learning.
- Engagement with communities to determine how to support them in developing resilience against serious violence.
- How to access deprived communities better, including the use of third sector organisations and the use of new selective licensing powers introduced in 2023.

6.9 The Panel noted the importance of third sector organisations engaging deprived communities and accessing people in need. It was therefore agreed that the draft SVD Action Plan be circulated in early 2024, before it is agreed in February 2024, to facilitate comment from members.

6.10 It was agreed that a further update on the progress of work in relation to SVD and against the action plan be organised for later in 2024. As part of this, it was agreed that other members of the CSP, including the Police, should be invited to discuss the work they are undertaking in relation to serious violence.

7.0 Recommendations

7.1 That a further review Panel be arranged in twelve months to receive an update on progress with the implementation of the Serious Violence Duty Action Plan, including representatives from the BSafe Partnership.

7.2 That the draft Serious Violence Duty Action Plan be shared with members of the Climate Change and Environment Scrutiny Committee for information in early 2024.

7.3 Does the information submitted include any exempt information? No

8.0 List of appendices

8.1 None.

9.0 Financial considerations

9.1 None.

10.0 Legal considerations

10.1 None.

11.0 Risk management considerations

11.1 None.

12.0 Equalities considerations and the impact of this decision for our children and young people

12.1 None.

13.0 Sustainability, climate change and environmental considerations

13.1 None.

14.0 Internal/external consultation undertaken

14.1 None.

15.0 Background papers

15.1 None.