

Subject:	Update on the Violence Vulnerability and Exploitation Strategy and Action Plan		
Date of Meeting:	11th March 2019		
Report of:	Executive Director for Neighbourhoods, Communities & Housing		
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Ward(s) affected:	(All Wards);		

FOR GENERAL RELEASE

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT AND POLICY CONTEXT

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to provide Committee with an update on the city's Violence, Vulnerability & Exploitation (VVE) Strategy and the associated VVE Action Plan.
- 1.2 The Neighbourhoods, Inclusion, Communities & Equalities (NICE) Committee last received a report on the VVE Strategy in March 2018. The March 2018 report briefed the Committee on the current threat in relation to Child Criminal Exploitation (CCE), Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE) and gang activity related to the emerging 'County Lines' phenomenon. It also outlined the strategy being adopted by the Community Safety Partnership to disrupt this activity and to support people to exit their involvement in such activity.
- 1.3 This report provides Committee with an update on work that has been undertaken since March 2018 and a briefing of planned work for 2019-20.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS:

- 2.1 That the Committee notes the reported progress in relation to the VVE Strategy and Action Plan.
- 2.2 That the Committee agree that a further progress report be submitted to NICE Committee in 12 months' time.

3. CONTEXT/ BACKGROUND INFORMATION

- 3.1 In March 2018 the Community Safety Partnership developed a VVE Strategy with the following aims:
 - a. Prevent vulnerable people from becoming involved with organised crime networks
 - b. Safeguard vulnerable people who are being exploited
 - c. Provide a safe, supportive pathway to enable vulnerable people to exit involvement with organised crime networks

d. A decrease in drug gang related activity in the city

3.2 The work will be underpinned by a communications plan focusing on vulnerable and young people, communities and professionals and will be informed by data analysis and community intelligence.

3.3 The Violence and Vulnerability Unit from the Home Office conducted a 'locality review' in April 2018. This was a one day process where interviews and focus groups were conducted with front line practitioners to gather information, knowledge and perception to build a qualitative picture of the key issues and drivers around County Lines, gangs, youth violence and vulnerability. The recommendations from this report informed the majority of the VVE Action Plan.

3.4 The Locality Review outcome report can be found in Appendix One and the updated VVE Action Plan can be found in Appendix Two. The original Action Plan has been consolidated into four key headings (below) and examples of progress towards each heading can be found later in section three of this report:

- Early interventions and safeguarding
- Disruption and enforcement
- Communications and education
- Data analysis and research

3.5 £156,000 was allocated in the 2018/19 council budget to help deliver the VVE Strategy. This was used to recruit a VVE Coordinator. It also enabled the council to commission the St. Giles Trust to support people out of involvement with organised crime networks and to provide support to schools to raise awareness and help safeguard young people at risk.

3.6 The VVE Coordinator started in post on 1st October 2018. The Coordinator's initial priorities were to review and update the VVE Action Plan, to organise a Locality Review 'visioning' event with partner agencies and to integrate the outcomes of this event back into the Action Plan.

3.7 The Locality Review visioning event was held on 20th November at Hove Cricket Ground. It was facilitated by the Violence and Vulnerability Unit with support from the Coordinator and Sussex Police. The event was opened by Geoff Raw and closed by Assistant Chief Constable Nick May. It was attended by around 100 professionals from social care, social housing, police, education, youth services, universities, refugee & migrant groups, community safety and neighbouring local authorities. The event provided attendees with an update on the Locality Review, the key recommendations and then moved into a World Café exercise for partners to provide feedback.

3.8 The Locality Review recommended that the city holds a VVE / County Lines week of action. This is being planned for early summer.

3.9 Early intervention and safeguarding:

3.9.1 This section of the VVE Action Plan is led strategically by the Head of Adolescent Services, Brighton & Hove City Council. It should be noted though that other individuals and agencies/partners may lead on the implementation of specific actions. This section focuses on the safeguarding of children and vulnerable

adults and provision of early interventions to avoid people becoming at risk of exploitation. Progress under this section of the plan includes:

- 3.9.1.1 An initial review of all safeguarding processes to ensure that they are fit for purpose to manage the types of developing risk in the city. This led to an acknowledgement that whilst the processes are robust, GDPR many have resulted in some anxiety across the professional network in regard to Information Sharing. Therefore, a key focus is in ensuring organisations in the city support their staff to understand GDPR and the ability to still share safeguarding concerns under this legislation.
- 3.9.1.2 Organisations across the city with the Local Safeguarding Children Board (LSCB) applied to Bedfordshire University for support in developing a Contextual Safeguarding Model of Practice. While we were not successful with this bid the multi agency Safeguarding Leads in the city are looking at developing a Contextual Safeguarding Network in the city to lead this work.
- 3.9.1.3 Commissioning services such within the Community and Voluntary Sector (CVS) to undertake outreach youth work, engagement and communications with young people not currently known to statutory sectors but who are at risk of becoming involved in drug dealing or other criminal activity. This includes the LSCB commissioning YMCA Downlink Group to lead on exploitation training and messaging; and AudioActive having an increased presence on The Level over the summer when there was a significant increase in activity. This work was supported by the work of the Extended Adolescent Service;
- 3.9.1.4 A successful bid to the Home Office's Early Youth Intervention Fund by the Sussex Police & Crime Commissioner for over £850k (for pan-Sussex);
- 3.9.1.5 Beginning to develop awareness raising campaigns to improve the quality and frequency of information / intelligence sharing about people at risk to the police / MASH.
- 3.9.1.6 The Coordinator is working with partners to develop a commissioners group to ensure that opportunities to develop services are maximised and to avoid duplication of commissions thus wasting limited public money.
- 3.9.1.7 St. Giles Trust has been delivering awareness raising workshops in schools across the city and is also undertaking direct interventions with young people at risk of exploitation or who are already exploited.

3.10 Disruption and enforcement:

- 3.10.1 This section of the VVE Action Plan is led strategically by Detective Superintendent Jeff Riley, Sussex Police. It should be noted though that other individuals and agencies/partners may lead on the implementation of specific actions. This section focuses on the tools and powers available to multi-agency partners to protect children and vulnerable adults at risk of exploitation; and to disrupt the criminal gangs operating in the city. Progress under this section of the plan includes:

- 3.10.1.1 Using current legislation around Modern Slavery and Trafficking to prosecute people responsible for exploiting people into criminal networks;
- 3.10.1.2 Explicit and covert police operations in vulnerable locations, such as The Level, known for drug dealing, CCE, etc.
- 3.10.1.3 An increased focus on cuckooing by the Partnership Tactical Tasking Coordination Group (PTTCG) and the creation of a multi-agency cuckooing group. This helped develop a clear and robust police operation to swiftly address cuckooing issues through the use of Closure Orders; and the revision of guidance for professionals and workers issued via the LSCB and Safeguarding Adults Board (SAB) around cuckooing.

3.11 Communications and education:

- 3.11.1 This section of the VVE Action Plan is led strategically by the VVE Coordinator, Brighton & Hove City Council. It should be noted though that other individuals and agencies/partners may lead on the implementation of specific actions. This section focuses on developing a clear and consistent city-wide communications strategy to ensure that partner agencies are sharing successful outcomes to interventions / multi-agency enforcement operations; raising awareness in all our neighbourhoods and communities around VVE / County Lines; increasing reporting and information sharing; and training / professional development for people who need it such as families, carers, teachers, housing providers, taxi drivers, etc.
- 3.11.2 Progress in this section includes a draft Communications Strategy and related Action Plan; developing a VVE communications group to ensure that messages in the city and across Sussex are consistent, sharing information appropriately and avoiding contradictory or poorly-timed news stories; and regular briefings through Community Safety Partnership and Safeguarding Boards around developing issues such as cuckooing.
- 3.11.3 The Week of Action will provide an opportunity to showcase progress made against the VVE Action Plan, to raise awareness in all Brighton & Hove neighbourhoods and communities of County Lines and to involve professionals in a multi-agency enforcement operation.

3.12 Data analysis and research:

- 3.12.1 This section of the VVE Action Plan is led strategically by Suzanne Leadbetter, Intelligence Unit within Sussex Police. It should be noted though that other individuals and agencies/partners may lead on the implementation of specific actions.
- 3.12.2 A sub-group is being developed for city-wide multi-agency data analysts to review and share information with the intention of it enabling more precise commissioning decisions, targeting of resources and bespoke communications campaigns based on threat, risk, demand, etc.

4. **ANALYSIS & CONSIDERATION OF ANY ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS**

- 4.1 This report is intended to provide an update on current progress on the work carried out as part of the VVE Strategy and Action Plan, this section is not applicable. This is informed by the city's Community Safety and Crime Reduction Strategy 2017-20.
- 4.2 Analysis of the aims and objectives of the Community Safety and Crime Reduction Strategy is undertaken annually via the strategic assessment.

5. COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT & CONSULTATION

- 5.1 The Locality Review described in section three sets out the initial consultation undertaken with professionals and / or frontline workers around exploitation.
- 5.2 Section three of the VVE Action Plan focuses entirely on communications and education and this will involve a wide range of community engagement on an ongoing basis. The detail of this will be worked out within the Communications sub-group as set out in the strategy.

6. CONCLUSION

- 6.1 This report is to provide an update on progress of work under the VVE Strategy and to invite any comment.

7. FINANCIAL & OTHER IMPLICATIONS:

Financial Implications:

- 7.1 Recurrent funding of £0.156m was provided for VVE as set out in paragraph 3.4 of the report.

Finance Officer Consulted: Name: Michael Bentley Date: 31/01/19

Legal Implications:

7.2

Lawyer Consulted: Name: Simon Court Date: dd/mm/yy

Equalities Implications:

- 7.3 County Lines and VVE is a sensitive and complex issue can have a significant impact on people and communities. This is recognised in the fact that it may have a disproportionate impact on specific protected characteristics (particularly minority groups) and an increased impact for people who belong in more than one minority group. People particularly vulnerable to exploitation may include people with mental health problems, children excluded from school or people with a Learning Disability.
- 7.4 A key focus of the Communications Action Plan will be to identify groups with increased vulnerability to exploitation through meaningful engagement particularly around increasing trust and confidence in statutory services. The city has a wealth of relevant data and it is an aim of the data analysis and research

section of the action plan to form an analysts group to make better use of all of the data available. This can include learning from other cities and national best practice to ensure that specific groups of people who may face social inequalities can access information and support.

- 7.5 A high level Equality Impact Assessment (EIA) will be completed by the VVE Coordinator alongside the development of the final VVE Action Plan. An update can be provided to Committee upon completion. Further EIA will need to be completed on specific actions such as commissioning of services, etc.

Sustainability Implications:

- 7.6 None

Any Other Significant Implications:

- 7.7 None

SUPPORTING DOCUMENTATION

Appendices:

1. VVE Action Plan 2019

Documents in Members' Rooms

1. Locality Review summary report 2018

Background Documents

None