

**AVON AND SOMERSET POLICE AND CRIME PANEL**

**POLICE AND CRIME NEEDS ASSESSMENT 2014**

**10 DECEMBER 2014**

**1. Background**

- 1.1 The Police and Crime Needs Assessment (PCNA) is conducted on an annual basis with support and input from a wide range of partner agencies. The assessment aims to identify the most significant issues, risks and threats facing crime and community safety agencies over the next three years and is used to inform the refresh of the Police and Crime Plan and grants and commissioning process for 2015/16.
- 1.2 The PCNA was informed by extensive public and partnership consultation which included PACT priorities for 2014, the Police and Crime Survey, local authority quality of life surveys and wider OPCC public consultation activity. The OPCC has also consulted widely with partner agencies on the findings of the 2014 PCNA, including representatives from Police, Community Safety Partnerships, Health and Wellbeing Boards, Fire and Rescue Services, National Probation Service, Voluntary and Community sector umbrella organisations and the Police and Crime Panel.

**2. Key Findings**

- 2.1 Local and national self-reported victimisation studies indicate that the risk of crime and ASB has continued to fall over recent years across most crime categories. This has been supported by reductions in prolific acquisitive offending, youth offending and changes in the environment that have reduced the opportunity for offending to take place.
- 2.2 Incidents of fraud and low-level acquisitive crime such as shoplifting and bilking are, however, increasing – as are the risks of being targeted on-line via cyber and cyber-enabled offending. Local survey findings indicate that residents have been increasingly affected by financial hardship over the last year, which has potential to stimulate demand in the market for stolen and counterfeit goods.
- 2.3 Young people, people from Black and Minority Ethnic Communities and people with complex needs remain the groups at most disproportionate risk of victimisation. These groups are also least likely to report their victimisation to the police.
- 2.4 Personally targeted offences such as domestic and sexual abuse, exploitation and hate crime remain substantially under-reported and as such, the true extent of victimisation remains unknown. It is these areas of ‘hidden harm’ that present the greatest safeguarding risks to vulnerable victims.

- 2.5 Improvements in risk assessment, recording practices, intelligence, information sharing and confidence to report are resulting in more 'hidden harm' and safeguarding cases being identified. Mental health demands also continue to increase as a result of growing need, improvements in the identification of vulnerable people and reductions in statutory service provision.
- 2.6 These increasing demands are placing considerable strain on safeguarding agencies with demand pressures expected to increase further over the next three years. The capacity and capability of organisations to tackle and prevent crime facilitated on-line also remains limited.
- 2.7 On-line activity presents some of the fastest growing areas of risk for victimisation and safeguarding. The last year has seen increases in identified cases of harmful sexual behaviour amongst young people (sexting and possession of illicit sexual images), stalking, harassment, grooming and other forms of sexual exploitation facilitated on-line - particularly via the use of social media and anonymous dating sites.
- 2.8 Intelligence suggests that aspects of organised crime are becoming more diversified and sophisticated, particularly with regard to local drugs markets and criminal activity facilitated on-line. This is increasingly presenting new challenges for enforcement agencies.
- 2.9 There are indications nationally that rural crime is becoming more targeted, with increases in the theft of high value farming machinery and associated rises in the value of stolen goods. Members of Rural / Farm Watch schemes are also less likely to feel that the police are dealing with the issues that matter in their area than other 'watch' members or local residents more generally.
- 2.10 Drugs and alcohol remain significant drivers of victimisation and offending behaviour, however there are indications that substance misuse amongst those most vulnerable to being victims or offenders is in decline.
- 2.11 The public's priorities and expectations are clear and have generally remained static over recent years, with anti-social behaviour, road safety, parking and burglary being the most prevalent community concerns. Public confidence in local policing has increased significantly over the last year, however public contacts indicate that resourcing constraints measures have potential to impact negatively on public perception.
- 2.12 The number of people killed or seriously injured in the area has been increased since 2011, alongside a disproportionate increase in the number of motorcyclists killed and seriously injured on Avon and Somerset's roads.
- 2.13 The crime, community safety and criminal justice landscape continues to undergo rapid and extensive change as a result of political and economically driven reform. In some cases, this has led to the fragmentation of services,

loss or dilution of specialist roles and knowledge and more complex delivery arrangements. Ongoing austerity measures and political uncertainty mean that changes are likely to continue over the next three years with potential to impact significantly upon performance and delivery.

- 2.14 Reductions in agency resources are placing particular strain on capacity to undertake preventative activity which could be critical to reducing longer term future demand on all agencies. Prevention strategies could be better co-ordinated across agencies, particularly in reducing vulnerability to low level acquisitive crime and cyber-crime
- 2.15 Avon and Somerset's population continues to grow and diversify. This presents challenges to service providers in providing visible neighbourhood services, maintaining an awareness of local needs and cultures, and ensuring equality of access to local services.

### 3. Strategic Risks

3.1 The 2014 Police and Crime Needs Assessment highlighted ten strategic risks which will be considered as part of the refresh of the Police and Crime Plan for 2015-17. These include:

- Reducing public sector budgets and impact on **preventative**, partnership and neighbourhood activity
- Disparity in terms of risk of victimisation and harm, and under-reporting, confidence and satisfaction amongst **young people** – alongside reductions in youth provision
- New criminal technology and techniques, particularly in increasing vulnerability to **cyber-crime**, grooming, exploitation, harassment and organised offending
- **Drugs and alcohol**, which remain significant drivers of violent and acquisitive offending and ASB
- Prevalence of **hidden harm** and increases in **safeguarding demand**, including mental health
- Increases in **low level acquisitive crime** and increased financial hardship
- Potential for reductions in support for **low and medium risk victims and offenders** as a result of austerity measures and changes in commissioning arrangements
- Increase in **vulnerable road users** and risk of being killed or seriously injured on Avon and Somerset's roads
- Impact of **organisational reform**, fragmentation of services and loss / dilution of specialist knowledge and expertise

- Impact of rapid **growth and diversification of local communities**, including the challenge of identifying and meeting the needs of new communities

#### 4. Opportunities and Recommendations

4.1 The Assessment also highlights a series of opportunities and recommendations which will be considered as part of the Police and Crime Plan refresh for 2015-17. These include:-

- Maintaining a multi-agency commitment to integrated approaches to tackling complex need – including targeted local problem solving in the areas of highest demand
- Strengthening the cross-agency focus on prevention through the development of a shared prevention strategy – including focus on the built environment and cybercrime
- Continued commitment to drugs and alcohol education, early intervention and treatment
- Reviewing current and future resourcing implications of increases in safeguarding demand, including future collaboration opportunities
- Further improving confidence to report victimisation, including third party reporting, outreach and advocacy – particularly amongst young people and BME communities
- Improving training, case management, information management and information sharing, particularly in relation to vulnerable victims that are outside of MARAC
- Improving planning and co-ordination of the response to road safety, including local highways policy and embedding the Policing the Roads Strategy
- Building capacity within and across organisations and communities, particularly in fostering ‘active citizenship’ and maximising use of new tools and powers
- Continuing to support modernisation and innovation in improving crime and criminal justice processes
- Working collaboratively to understand and meet the needs of local communities, including new and minority communities and young people

The full Police and Crime Needs Assessment for 2014 can be found at:-  
<http://www.avonandsomerset-pcc.gov.uk/Your-PCC/Police-and-Crime-Needs-Assessment.aspx>)

## **RECOMMENDATION**

That the Panel note the report.

## **CONTACT OFFICER**

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