

Leicestershire County Council

Community Safety Strategy

2022-2026

Purpose

This strategy document outlines Leicestershire County Councils (LCC) responsibilities and approach in dealing with issues of community safety including crime and disorder. It outlines relevant legislation, local structures, the role of the LCC community safety team, and the current crime and disorder priorities agreed by Community Safety Partnerships (CSP's), the Police Crime Commissioner, and the statutory responsible agencies across Leicestershire.

Background : Legislative Framework and Local Structures

The Crime and Disorder Act 1998 identifies 'Responsible Authorities' and places a duty on them to work together to reduce crime and disorder in their areas. Designated within this statutory arrangement are County Councils, District Councils, Fire and Rescue Authorities, Health Authorities, Police Forces, Police and Crime Commissioners and Probation Services.

The Crime and Disorder Act also established Community Safety Partnerships (CSPs), which are an alliance of organisations statutorily responsible for reducing crime and disorder, substance misuse and re-offending within a set locality. Leicestershire has six CSP's based on District and Borough geographical areas, this includes one merged CSP for Blaby District and Hinckley and Bosworth Borough.

Police and Crime Commissioners (PCCs) are elected representatives who oversee how crime and community safety is tackled in a police force area. Their aim is to cut crime and to ensure the police force is efficient and effective. PCC's are also required to introduce a police and crime plan focused on reducing crime and disorder. Notably police and crime plans and CSP plans will often share priorities and include ways in which CSPs can work with PCCs to deliver actions.

The oversight function in relation to the way in which the PCC discharges their duties is undertaken by the Leicester City, Leicestershire, and Rutland (LLR) Police and Crime Panel. The panel includes a Leicestershire County Council representative; this is the County Council portfolio lead for safer communities and chair of the Leicestershire Safer Communities Strategy Board (LSCSB).

The Leicestershire Safer Communities Strategy Board (LSCSB) was formed under the auspices of the Police and Justice Act 2006; this gives statutory responsibility for two-tier authorities such as Leicestershire, to have a County-level Crime and Disorder strategy group. The LSCSB undertakes this function and membership comprises of representatives from Leicestershire County Council, each of Leicestershire's CSPs, Leicestershire Police, Leicestershire Public Health, the Probation Service, Combined Fire Authority, Leicestershire Fire and Rescue Service, Leicestershire Clinical Commissioning Groups, and the Office of the Police Crime Commissioner.

As a result of the introduction of Police and Crime Commissioners in 2012, additional legislation was introduced focused on county-level strategy groups working within two-tier local authority arrangements. The Crime and Disorder regulations 2012 placed a duty on county level strategy groups to introduce a Community Safety Agreement (CSA). The purpose of the CSA is to identify and enable co-ordination of common county wide priorities. In Leicestershire the CSA is a 'public' document, available online and provides links to partnership strategies and plans, national strategies and supporting 'toolkits' linked to crime and disorder.

Our Approach

The emphasis of the strategy will be to continue to build on established strong partnerships to identify and address community safety priorities, exploring opportunities to share resources to do so. We will adopt a trauma-informed methodology ensuring our approach recognises the prevalence of early adversity and traumatic events in the lives of individuals, acknowledging the role trauma may play in an individual's life, in groups and in communities and importantly how these can affect their views and responses to any interactions or interventions we undertake with them.

In addition to dealing with identified priorities it will also be vital to retain capacity and capability to respond to new and emerging issues in a timely proactive way. The approach needs to retain sufficient flexibility to recognise and respond to both established and emerging issues by taking a problem solving 'public health approach';

- Using data, information and evidence to recognise, inform and prioritise our response, this not only involves data and statistical analysis but also a level of 'horizon scanning' examples include membership of appropriate specialist practitioner groups, scanning new or proposed policy, procedure or legislation, ensuring local and world events are viewed and assessed for potential local impacts, scanning news and social media etc.

- Ensuring we evaluate the impact on our diverse communities; Leicestershire is made up of a dynamic multi-cultural changing population and some approaches taken to tackle crime and disorder may not be as effective within some sections of the community or have unexpected consequences. To help mitigate this and maximise effectiveness we will work closely with our partners, specialists, subject matter experts and where possible those affected or potentially affected to help assess how effective our approach may be.
- Deciding, implementing and coordinating a response in partnership. This may involve membership of a task and finish group or indeed any other partnership assembly whether as member, support or lead agency. We will take a project management approach when problem solving, with stakeholders, assessing the problem and options, agreeing a delivery plan, setting milestones, assessing outcomes, spreading lessons and learning.
- Ensuring we monitor and evaluate impact and effectiveness. This not only involves assessing the effectiveness of an initiative, plan or approach but also ensure any learning is shared with stakeholders, gleaning what has worked and just as important what has not.
- As mentioned above, this strategy takes on a public health approach, which will involve defining and measuring the problem, determining the cause or risk factors for the problem, determining how to prevent or ameliorate the problem, and implementing effective strategies on a larger scale and evaluating the impact.

The approach provides the flexibility to strategically respond to emerging threats and opportunities whilst retaining the ability to work with partner agencies to utilise their experience and expertise acquired over many years to work with the public, identify collective priorities, and introduce effective strategies to combat crime and disorder and broader community safety matters.

Strategy Delivery

In two-tier authorities, County Councils have a pivotal role in co-ordinating community safety activity in addition to their role as a statutory responsible authority. Part of the role of the LCC Community Safety Team is to provide support to the county level strategy group; the LSCSB and support the effective management of identified common community safety priorities as contained in the Community Safety Agreement.

The key aspects of the local strategy linked to the statutory responsibilities placed on county level crime and disorder strategy groups are as follows:

- That the Leicestershire Safer Communities Strategy Board (LSCSB) will be responsible for setting strategic priorities at a county level.
- The LCC Community Safety Team will co-ordinate with the assistance of partner agencies the agenda and the work-streams overseen by LSCSB; and
- In line with statutory responsibilities within two-tier local authority arrangements co-ordination will include assisting in the preparation and review of a Leicestershire Community Safety Agreement together with a regular review of the LSCSB terms of reference.

Another important function of the LSCSB is to draw together senior partners from the responsible authorities. The 'Board' provides the forum to discuss and agree priorities and check and challenge around matters affecting the delivery of crime reduction, offender management, and substance misuse across the county. A part of the LCC community safety team duties involve providing support to enable the effective operation of this aspect of the LSCSB activity.

The LCC Community Safety Team will also provide a 'horizon scanning' function, identifying new and emerging issues for the attention of the LSCSB and its constituent members. These will include statutory and national strategic directives; recent examples include the Government 'Beating Crime Plan 2021', The 'Tackling Violence Against Women and Girls Strategy 2021', The 'Harm to Hope Drugs Plan 2021' and the 'Serious Violence Duty'.

Priorities

The priorities in relation to crime and disorder are agreed by LSCSB and are outlined in the current CSA. The county wide priorities are as follows:

- Identify and protect the most vulnerable and those subject to exploitation;
- Reduce crime and fear of crime.
- Reduce incidence and impact of ASB.
- Reduce harm from alcohol and substance misuse.
- Reduce risk of harm to young people from cybercrime and bullying.
- Increase reporting of domestic abuse and protect the most vulnerable.
- Increase confidence in reporting of hate incidents.
- Discharge all statutory duties such as those pertaining to domestic abuse, serious violence, counter terrorism etc

The county wide crime and disorder focused priorities will be reviewed through the LSCSB.

There are also strong links between these crime and disorder related priorities and three priorities within the LCC 5-year strategic plan (2022-26) focused on community matters. The three strategic plan priorities are as follows:

- **Improving Opportunities:** The people of Leicestershire have the opportunities and support they need to take control of their health and wellbeing.
- **Keeping People Safe and Well:** People in Leicestershire live in a healthy environment and have the opportunities and support they need to take control of their health and wellbeing. Also to ensure the people of Leicestershire are safe and protected from harm; and...
- **Great Communities:** Leicestershire communities are thriving and integrated and inclusive communities in which people support each other and take responsibility for their local area.

A part of the LCC community safety team priorities involve working with internal and external partners to strengthen links between partnership work-streams being undertaken through crime and disorder and community focused strategies.

The LCC Community Safety Team

Community safety encompasses not just criminal activities but also takes account of social and environmental influences. As well as traditional crime prevention and reduction activities, community safety also includes addressing quality of life issues.

LCC's community safety team comprises a Team Manager, a Community Safety Coordinator and Community Safety Officers. Diverse work-streams include anti-social behaviour, domestic and sexual abuse, hate incidents and 'Prevent', serious and organised crime as well as emerging subject areas such as modern slavery, cyber-crime, substance misuse, migrant and refugee support etc.

As a two-tier authority, much of LCC's community safety team role is to provide strategic leadership, information and advice to implement county wide delivery in conjunction with partners, ensuring an appropriate, timely response to community safety matters.

The community safety team support with attendance at CSP meetings and the drafting of partnership plans, coordination of core areas of business such as anti-social behaviour (ASB), hate and 'Prevent', as well as horizon scanning for upcoming legislation changes or national developments which may influence local delivery. Community safety by its very nature is continuously evolving with new emerging/developing areas of business.

The work of the LCC community safety team is directly linked to enabling LCC to discharge its duties in partnership with other statutorily responsible agencies in regard to reducing crime and disorder.

Conclusion

The way community safety operates in Leicestershire is complex and involves many different agencies and stakeholders. Due to the structure and at times potentially disparate responsibilities of the statutorily responsible agencies there is significant risk of duplication or missed opportunities to develop collective strategies and priorities. The LSCSB brings together senior representatives from statutorily responsible agencies and will with the support of the LCC Community Safety Team have a key role in co-ordinating priorities across Leicestershire.

The future will also provide challenges as local structures change, new procedures and legislation is passed and implemented or new threats impacting crime and disorder emerge. The approach described within this document is integral to the strategy and will support early identification and response to such issues.