

FINAL VERSION

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ROYAL BOROUGH OF
**WINDSOR &
MAIDENHEAD**
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Serious Violence Strategy

2024-27

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FOR: THE ROYAL BOROUGH OF WINDSOR AND MAIDENHEAD
COMMUNITY SAFETY PARTNERSHIP

RBWM Serious Violence Strategy

Forewords



The Police, Crime, Sentencing and Courts Act 2022 has created a new Duty which will require local authorities, the police, fire and rescue authorities, specified criminal justice agencies and health authorities to strengthen partnership working to better understand what causes serious violence and identify steps we could take to prevent and reduce it in future.

We understand the devastating impact violence can have on individuals, their families and on the community as a whole. This strategy sets out our commitment to working with not only our statutory partners but also our voluntary sector to strengthen our practices and look at how we can prevent serious violence and reduce the impact of it.

The Royal Borough of Windsor and Maidenhead is committed to looking at these causes and prioritising instilling a sense of safety, security and strength within our communities and visitors to the Borough.

We are using a public health approach which means that to tackle serious violence, an evidence-led approach should be used to identify what causes violence and find interventions that work to prevent it in the first place.

Councillor Simon Werner, Leader of Royal Borough of Windsor and Maidenhead Council
January 2024



At Thames Valley Police we have focussed a lot of our efforts and resources on the reduction and prevention of serious violence, as well as the relentless pursuit of offenders who commit violent crime, particularly knife crime. I am pleased to say that this hard work is paying off and we are seeing good reductions of knife crime across the Thames Valley region. Our work in this area is not possible without the joint working with our partners, and a Strategy which sets out how we will all pledge to continue our efforts in this area of Crime.

The Strategy will ensure we keep the momentum going and hold ourselves accountable to ensure the public feel confident and safe in places where they live and work. We want to continue to deter anyone from carrying a knife, or committing a violent offence, by sharing intelligence, conducting hot spot patrols with our community wardens, and attending community engagement and educational events with our PCSO's. I welcome the Strategy and look forward to working with our partners to deliver a safe Borough.

Superintendent 4093 Clare Knibbs, LPA Commander Windsor and Maidenhead
January 2024

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1. Executive Summary

This strategy is produced as part of the Royal Borough of Windsor and Maidenhead’s work to meet our Serious Violence Duty, as defined within the Police, Crime, Sentencing and Courts Act 2022. The Community Safety Partnership (CSP) has jointly developed the strategy, and in particular the following agencies contributed:

- Thames Valley Police
- RBWM Community Safety
- RBWM Public Health
- Achieving for Children (RBWM Children’s Social Care)
- Optalis (RBWM Adult Social Care)
- NHS Frimley Integrated Care Board.

The strategy has been produced using the following sources:

- Analysis of serious violence crime data, (Windsor and Maidenhead Needs Assessment, October 2023)
- Survey and interview of agency representatives from the Community Safety Partnership
- Result of previous residents' surveys.

The CSP recognises that serious crime and violence levels are comparatively low in the Royal Borough, but that where such crimes are committed the impact is significant. All contributors to the strategy affirm their commitment to preventing, reducing, and tackling serious violence to minimise harm and trauma. The CSP wishes to adopt a public health approach to this work.

Residents of RBWM do not identify crime or violence as priority areas for attention within the Royal Borough, nor as issues causing them to feel unsafe. It is notable, however, that women have a slightly higher tendency to feel unsafe in public and particularly at night. CSP members, however, remain committed to addressing serious violence and identify the following crimes as being relevant to this strategy:

- Youth violence and use of/carrying of weapons
- Drug related offences
- Robbery and acquisitive crime
- VAWG and gender-based abuse/violence – specifically domestic abuse, non-fatal strangulation, domestic homicide, sexual violence
- Exploitation – county lines, cuckooing and other exploitation offences perpetrated against children or vulnerable adults, including sexual and criminal exploitation.

Partners identify positive and effective areas of practice, and some which require further development. In particular, contributors report good partnership working and information sharing on an operational level, but identify a need to strengthen the strategic infrastructure around this. In particular, resourcing, access to information about impact and evidence, and governance and accountability are cited as areas for development.

RBWM CSP also recognises the need to continue to develop existing partnerships and to bring in as-yet unheard voices in this strategy for this area of work. In particular, the following groups are considered a priority:

- Young people
- People at risk of exploitation
- People subjected to serious violence
- People who are involved with, or are at risk of being involved with, serious violence.

Consequently, the strategic priorities identified are set out below, and will form the basis of a delivery plan to be developed collaboratively with relevant partners:

Priority 1 – continue to support and actively engage with existing partnership forums and information sharing agreements to sustain effective prevention and responses to serious violence.

Priority 2 – continue to provide resources for schemes evidencing impact.

Priority 3 – Develop an impact assessment framework with agreed associated datasets to enable effective oversight of the work being undertaken to prevent and tackle serious violence.

Priority 4 – Develop an infrastructure of boards, executive groups and sub-groups which support the effective focus and accountability required to deliver on the serious violence delivery plan and other strategic delivery plans in the Royal Borough.

Priority 5 – Identify sources and funding to deliver effective awareness training, including referral pathways and signposting, for frontline staff.

Priority 6 – Identify and a quality assurance framework for the delivery of diversion and activity-based interventions for young people.

Priority 7 – Identify a suite of activities, initiatives and interventions which have proven impact in relation to serious violence which should be prioritised for delivery and for long term, sustainable funding.

Priority 8 – Identify and ring-fence long-term funding sources for those initiatives which have been prioritised for delivery.

Priority 9 – Develop an engagement and consultation plan for those groups whose voice is currently missing from the strategy.

Priority 10 – Develop a deeper understanding of the statistics presented in the needs assessment.

Priority 11 – Develop an agreed analysis of the drivers and causes of serious violence in RBWM.

2. Introduction

2.1. Context

The Police, Crime, Sentencing and Courts Act 2022 (the PCSC Act) created the Serious Violence Duty for specified authorities¹ to:

- “Ensure relevant services work together to share information and allow them to target their interventions, where possible through existing partnership structures, collaborate and plan to prevent and reduce serious violence within their local communities.
- “Ensure that serious violence is an explicit priority for Community Safety Partnerships and make sure they have a strategy in place to explicitly tackle serious violence.”²

The Government published its Serious Violence Strategy in April 2018, in which it sets out its understanding of the nature and prevalence of serious violence as drivers for work to tackle serious violence.

The Duty, as set out in Chapter 1 of Part 2 of the PCSC Act, requires specified authorities to:

- “Work together and plan to prevent and reduce serious violence, including identifying the kinds of serious violence that occur in the area, the causes of that violence (so far as it is possible to do so), and to prepare and implement a strategy for preventing, and reducing serious violence in the area.

¹ Specified authorities, in relation to the Serious Violence Duty, are defined in section 11 of the PCSC Act: Chief officers of police, fire and rescue authorities, Integrated Care Boards, Local Health Boards, local authorities, youth offending teams and probation services.

² ‘Serious Violence Duty: Preventing and reducing serious violence statutory guidance for responsible authorities, England and Wales’ December 2022. <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/serious-violence-duty>

- “Consult educational, prison and youth custody authorities for the area in the preparation of their strategy.”

The Royal Borough of Windsor and Maidenhead (RBWM) Community Safety Partnership (CSP) produces this strategy in order to meet that part of the Duty.

In preparation and support to local authorities for complying with the Serious Violence Duty, the Home Office funded Crest to undertake an assessment of each area’s readiness for the Duty in March 2023. Crest also offered support in working towards readiness to meet the duty.

2.2. Definitions

The PCSC Act does not define serious violence for the purpose of the Duty but identifies that authorities should collaborate with relevant partners to identify the kinds of serious violence impacting their area.

RBWM has adopted the definition of serious violence as agreed by Community Safety Managers across the Thames Valley:

“Serious Violence includes specific types of recorded crime, such as homicide, grievous bodily harm, incidents that involve a knife, and areas of criminality where serious violence or its threat is inherent, such as in county lines drug dealing.”

This working definition is also recognised by the Thames Valley Police Violence Reduction Unit and the Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner. Additionally, this strategy has developed, with stakeholders an additional understanding of the forms of serious violence RBWM is committed to concerning itself with. These are identified in section 5.2 below.

This strategy discusses domestic abuse (DA) and violence against women and girls (VAWG) as they relate to serious violence, it also discusses sexual violence and recognises that people of all genders can be subjected to such abuse and violence. To reflect this inclusively, the term ‘gender-based violence and abuse’ is used and is intended to include all forms of domestic abuse, sexual violence and violence against women and girls.

2.3. Strategic needs assessment

The Serious Violence Duty requires the preparation of a strategy which is informed by a multi-agency, collaborative strategic needs assessment, involving statutory and community/voluntary partners. RBWM commissioned a Serious Violence Needs Assessment which was produced by Aaron Cheung, a Strategic Analyst at the Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner. The assessment presented relevant crime data and analysed this data to offer an explanation of what serious violence is being perpetrated in the Royal Borough, by whom, when and where. The assessment was received by the RBWM CSP in October 2023; it was a unilateral report which did not include input from other agencies and did not seek to explore the drivers and causes of serious violence within RBWM.

After receipt of the assessment, a brief consultation was undertaken with members of the Community Safety Partnership to establish an embryonic understanding as required by a strategic needs assessment for development of this strategy. This was necessarily limited in scope due to the remaining timescales available.

2.4. Crosscuts and intersections

RBWM recognises the cross-cutting nature of serious violence as it relates to other areas of strategic focus. In particular we acknowledge existing focus amongst partners within the Royal Borough on:

- Youth violence (including use and carrying of weapons)
- Drugs (including acquisitive crime, organised crime, county lines)
- Exploitation (including sexual and criminal exploitation; county lines, cuckooing, modern slavery and trafficking)
- Gender-based violence and abuse (including domestic abuse, sexual violence and violence against women and girls).

These areas represent significant overlap in themselves and all bear relation to serious violence in some form. RBWM wishes to highlight the prevalence of violence which falls within these spheres and, whilst they are covered by their own distinct strategies, wishes to identify these issues within this strategy.

Partners in RBWM are involved in the following areas of work with strategies or plans which impact on the issues and priorities identified in this Serious Violence Strategy:

- Domestic Abuse Executive Group (Domestic Abuse Strategy 2021-24 and Domestic Abuse Safe Accommodation Strategy 2021-24)
- Combating Drugs Partnership (East Berkshire Combating Drugs Partnership Plan)
- Serious Youth Violence Panel
- Adult Exploitation Multi-Agency Risk Assessment Conference.

It is the intention of the Community Safety Partnership (CSP), through this strategy and the relevant strategic forums to bring these groups and strategies, along with this strategy, into closer contact to build a more coherent and collaborative approach to all these strategic priorities.

2.5. Stakeholders and collaborators

The specified authorities named in the PCSC Act as collaborators for this strategy are:

- Chief officers of police
- Fire and rescue authorities
- Integrated Care Boards
- Local Health Boards
- Local authorities
- Youth offending teams
- Probation services.

All members of the Community Safety Partnership were invited to engage with the development of this strategy. Those who responded and contributed are:

- Thames Valley Police
- RBWM Community Safety
- RBWM Public Health
- Achieving for Children (RBWM Children's Social Care)
- Optalis (RBWM Adult Social Care)
- NHS Frimley Integrated Care Board.

RBWM acknowledge the absence of the voice of young people, those affected by serious violence and of community and voluntary sector agencies within this strategy. Our commitment is to continually review and develop this strategy, and to engage with these groups as part of that ongoing work.

3. Inputs

3.1. Needs assessment – crime data

Crime data was supplied and analysed by Thames Valley Police, via the Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner in the form of a Serious Violence Needs Assessment³. This report identified the quantitative crime data and drew out relevant analyses for an understanding of the nature and prevalence of serious violence in RBWM.

The analyst examined data for a 63-month period from January 2018 to April 2023 inclusive. This analysis looked at recorded levels of crime in two groups, using the definition of serious violence identified above:

- Group 1 Offences form the core measurement of serious violence and include homicide, attempted homicide, all grievous bodily harm and all knife crime. These were analysed in four categories:
 1. Violence with injury
 2. Violence without Injury
 3. Acquisitive crime
 4. Sexual offences.
- Group 2 Offences are those which would not fall under the strict understanding of serious violence as identified by the Home Office, but which Thames Valley partners feel are important in understanding the local picture. So, group two crimes are “recorded offences which contribute to the threat, inherecence and understanding of Group 1 Offences”.⁴

Additionally, the analysis identified the numbers and proportions of each offence type which were domestic abuse related.

3.2. Consultation & stakeholders

RBWM acknowledges that the strategic needs assessment was produced unilaterally and recognises the importance of seeking the views of stakeholders to develop insight for an effective strategy. To this end, some consultation was undertaken, or pre-existing survey data reviewed, as outlined below. The extent of this work was limited by time constraints but RBWM is committed to building on this approach to strengthen the partnerships and collaboration needed to understand and deliver the priorities on serious violence. Stakeholders include:

- CSP members
- Service providers from the charity and voluntary sectors
- Residents of RBWM, particularly including those affected by serious violence.

In order to understand the views of CSP members in relation to the Serious Violence Duty, a stakeholder survey was circulated to all members. Eight responses were received; all respondents were invited to discuss their views further and all accepted. The discussions took the form of informal, semi-structured interviews. These were initially focused on responses to the survey with space to elaborate in any direction participants felt relevant to the Duty and the Strategy.

³ The Serious Violence Needs Assessment report is available as an addendum to this strategy on request.

⁴ As above, p.4.

Input from the charity and voluntary sector remains a focus for future work in further developing this strategy.

In order to understand the views of the residents of RBWM in relation to serious violence, the results of the following recent surveys were used:

- RBWM Community Safety Survey 2020-21
- RBWM Resident Survey 2022
- RBWM Community Safety Survey 2022.

These surveys were general in nature, or focused on community safety more broadly, rather than on serious violence in particular. Therefore, more focused consultation with specific groups of RBWM residents is identified as a priority for future development of this strategy. In particular, views should be sought from:



4. Background and current state analysis

4.1. Conclusions of the strategic needs assessment

Levels of serious violence in RBWM are comparatively low and rank between 6th to 8th out of the 13 local authority areas in Thames Valley.

Most crimes falling under the serious violence definition have decreased in the time period considered.

In Group 1 Offences, violence with injury saw the largest number of victims and of suspects in the 18-21 age band with males being over-represented in both groups when compared to numbers in the general local population. Violence with injury offences in Group 2 saw the same trends.

Acquisitive crime only had data recorded in Group 1 Offences, and again males were over-represented as both victims and perpetrators for this crime type. The largest number of victims and perpetrators were from the 15-17 age band.

For sexual offences, victims/survivors of Group 1 Offences were more likely to be female (higher than in the general local population) and were mostly in the 15-17 age band; suspects were always male. Victims/survivors of Group 2 Offences were also more likely to be female, but were mostly from the 18-21 age band; 96% suspects were male.

Both the needs assessment, and Crest identify the need for further work investigating the statistics in more detail to develop a deeper understanding of patterns and causes of serious violence in the Royal Borough.

4.2. What stakeholders say

4.2.1. Community Safety Partnership

CSP members are aware that RBWM is a relatively affluent area with comparatively low levels of serious crime and violence. They have a strong wish, however, to continue to work together to prevent serious violence and to intervene early when signs appear. Contributors to this strategy are clear that despite relatively low levels in the Royal Borough, any incident of serious violence has potentially life-changing implications for those directly and indirectly affected. For this reason, they remain committed to tackling such violence and responding robustly.

CSP partners identified the following forms of violence as being a concern or priority for their agency:

- Knife/gun/weapon crime including assaults
- Youth attacks and young groups fighting each other
- Domestic abuse, including with weapons
- Violence against women and girls
- Sexual violence
- Non-fatal strangulation
- Domestic homicide
- Exploitation of vulnerable people/cuckooing, threats, coercion and acts of violence for gain
- County lines/violence associated with drugs
- Acquisitive crime.

All of the identified concerns fall under the definition adopted within this strategy, except, potentially, some elements of exploitation.

A number of initiatives, partnerships and projects were identified by respondents as preventing or reducing serious violence, and they reported being actively involved in those which related to their remit:

- Monthly Serious Youth Violence Panel
- Monthly Adult Exploitation Multi-Agency Risk Assessment Conference (AEMRAC)
- Live Life Without a Knife campaign (via the Family Hub)
- Operation Sceptre targeting knife crime through awareness raising and amnesties
- Operation Vigilant targeting sexual predatory behaviour in the night time economy
- Hospital Navigator Scheme focusing on knife injury in emergency departments
- Monthly Multi-Agency Risk Assessment Conference (MARAC) for domestic abuse
- Monthly Multi-Agency Tasking And Coordination (MATAC) for domestic abuse
- Youth Violence Subgroup of the CSP
- Violence Reduction Unit
- Amnesty bins (for weapons)

- East Berkshire Combating Drugs Partnership
- Community Safety Partnership.

Additionally, CSP respondents reported the following priorities relating to serious violence:

- Minimising risk through education, inclusion and alternative activities
- Working collaboratively with all agencies to reduce and eradicate serious violence
- Reducing drug-related harm/deaths
- Reducing drug related crime and drug supply
- Reducing knife enabled crime
- Reducing robbery
- Reducing all neighbourhood crime
- Improving criminal justice outcomes for all serious violence
- Using a problem solving approach to tackle serious violence hotspots and prolific offenders
- Building trust and confidence with the public to report and feel safe
- Changing the narrative and perceptions amongst young people around carrying knives/weapons, especially linked to protection/safety
- Ensuring young people feel safe
- Offering positive engagement opportunities for young people:
 - Alternative/diversionary activities for positive engagement away from gang activity
 - Training or employment
 - Preparation for adulthood
- Supporting people who are subjected to domestic abuse, including referring to the Dash Charity (all risk levels) and MARAC (high risk cases).

CSP members indicated that there seem to be good opportunities for alternative activities for young people, with good support and engagement from local agencies. The focus on the night-time economy is reported to be helpful, particularly Operation Vigilant with effective work around CCTV and Community Wardens. Respondents tended to indicate that multi-agency approaches are working well, with good attendance at meetings and effective information sharing. Some indicated good availability and analysis of police data to understand trends, others identified this as an area for improvement. Work focusing on young people was identified as working well, especially the Family Hub interventions, the non-statutory transitional work for 16-25 year-old non-care leavers and multi-agency forums such as AEMRAC and the Youth Violence Panel.

Greater awareness of the signs of exploitation or being at risk of exploitation, as a route into violence and gangs, was identified as an area for improvement. Knowledge and experience of staff delivering interventions was also identified as an area for focus, as well as the need for longer-term more sustainable funding sources for projects with proven impact, rather than short-term and one-off grants.

4.2.2. RBWM residents

Residents of RBWM do not tend to identify serious violence as a concern when asked about community safety or about how they feel about living in the area. Whilst the surveys used here were not designed to directly address the matter of serious violence, some of the questions focused on whether residents felt safe, and what their concerns around safety are.

Serious violence did not feature (nor crime of any type) in the top five things requiring improvement in the residents survey of 2022. This survey also identified that the vast majority of residents feel safe, but that gender and time of day does impact in this area. 97% of residents feel safe in their local

area in the day, 82% after dark. However, women feel less safe than men both in the day and at night. Whilst similar proportions feel “safe” in the day, only 64% of women feel “very safe” in the day, compared to 70% of men. 75% of women feel safe in their local area at night compared with 80% of men.

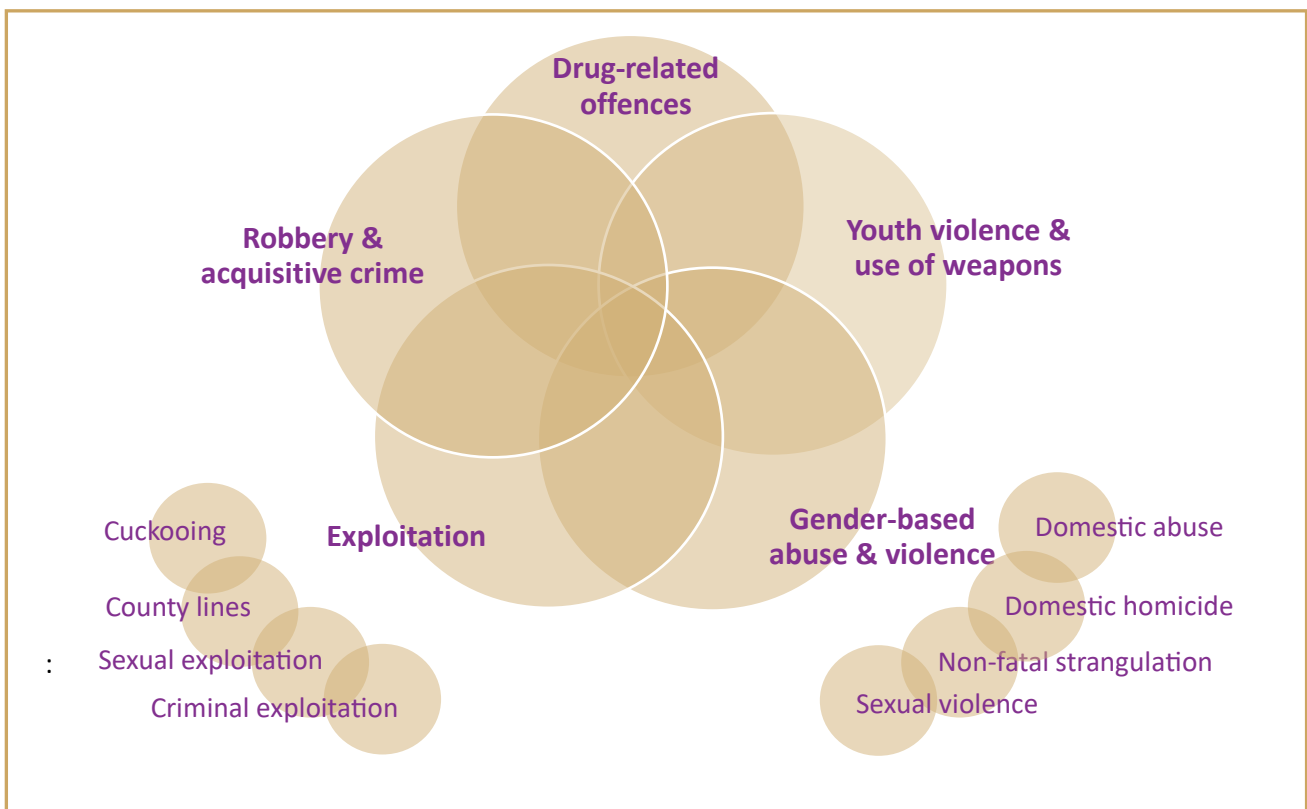
5. Strategic priorities

5.1. Summary

The needs assessment identifies a number of areas which require deeper investigation in order to fully understand what lies beneath the data and what the reality of the serious violence picture is in RBWM. In light of the data available and agency consultation a number of initial priorities have emerged.

5.2. Types of violence

Contributors to this strategy have identified a concern for forms of violence which include and go beyond those identified within the commissioned needs assessment⁵:



There is clear overlap between these ‘types’ of violence and abuse. These concerns should inform the groups consulted with in future development of this strategy and the delivery plan.

⁵ Whilst it is recognised that weapons are used in all age ranges, the data has shown a peak in the younger age ranges (below 25).

5.3. Agency activity

Whilst residents do not tend to identify any issues relating to serious violence as a high priority when asked about their safety, professionals working in RBWM recognise that for the minority of people impacted by serious violence, that impact is significant. Agencies remain committed to tackling the causes of serious violence through prevention, and addressing violence itself when it occurs.

The following have been identified as effective areas of work and should be priorities for continuation and further development:

- **Effective operational partnership working.** This includes:
 - Effective operational meetings and forums which are well attended, including the serious youth violence panel, MATAAC, MARAC, AEMRAC
 - Effective partnership communication at an operational level – this includes good communication and information sharing, shared responsibility and collaborative approaches and responses
 - Proactive police and multi-agency responses, such as tasking and coordination and problem-solving approaches using shared information, disruption and operations in local community areas.
- **Resources available for key areas of focus** such as the Hospital Navigator Scheme for knife injury in emergency departments, non-statutory transitional support for 16–25-year-olds at risk of exploitation, multi-agency preventative work in schools.

The following have been identified as areas requiring development to build effectiveness:

- **Governance** – improved oversight infrastructure and use of data to identify clear strategic priorities and to understand, monitor and plan effective, evidence-based interventions.
- **Practice and quality** – focus and investment in relevant continuous professional development (CPD) for:
 - Frontline staff to improve awareness and understanding of issues relating to serious violence (e.g. signs of exploitation, referral and signposting routes available)
 - Frontline staff to understand referral pathways and service availability
 - Interventions and diversion schemes to be delivered and managed by appropriately qualified staff with access to relevant CPD.
- **Funding** – more long term, sustainable funding for initiatives which are proven to have impact, instead of short term and/or one-off grants which do not allow for continuity of service provision.

6. Next steps – delivering the priorities

6.1. Delivery plan

Agencies in RBWM will collaborate using a public health approach to develop a multi-agency delivery plan with strategic aims informed by the priorities identified above, and summarised here:

Strategic Priorities

- 1 Continue to support and actively engage with existing partnership forums and information sharing agreements to sustain effective prevention and responses to serious violence
- 2 Continue to provide resources for schemes evidencing impact
- 3 Develop an impact assessment framework with agreed associated datasets to enable effective oversight of the work being undertaken to prevent and tackle serious violence
- 4 Develop an infrastructure of boards, executive groups and sub-groups which support the effective focus and accountability required to deliver on the serious violence delivery plan and other strategic delivery plans in the Royal Borough
- 5 Identify sources and funding to deliver effective awareness training, including referral pathways and signposting, for frontline staff
- 6 Identify a quality assurance framework for the delivery of diversion and activity-based interventions for young people
- 7 Identify a suite of activities, initiatives and interventions which have proven impact in relation to serious violence which should be prioritised for delivery and for long term, sustainable funding
- 8 Identify and ring-fence long-term funding sources for those initiatives which have been prioritised for delivery
- 9 Develop an engagement and consultation plan for those groups whose voice is currently missing from the strategy
- 10 Develop a deeper understanding of the statistics presented in the needs assessment
- 11 Develop an agreed analysis of the drivers and causes of serious violence in RBWM

6.2. Resourcing

The CSP has funding from the Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner until 2025 and makes a commitment to applying for relevant funding elsewhere, and in partnership where helpful. In particular, RBWM Council fully fund the Violence Reduction Coordinator work and will make available any physical resource needed to support the delivery plan. The CSP will actively seek external funding to support violence reduction work and initiatives together.

6.3. Accountability and monitoring

The CSP will provide strategic oversight and governance for the Serious Violence Strategy and the Delivery Plan. A Serious Violence Executive Board will be formed to oversee the effectiveness of the Serious Violence Delivery Plan. An annual review of the Serious Violence Delivery Plan will be conducted with all relevant partners and stakeholders, looking at all relevant crime statistics and data and making sure the priorities remain pertinent.

Ongoing development of the strategy and the delivery plan will include:

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- Further work to develop a deeper understanding of the crime data statistics
- Further work to understand the drivers and causes of serious violence
- Consultation with relevant groups, including:
 - Young people
 - People at risk of exploitation
 - People subjected to serious violence
 - People who are involved with, or are at risk of being involved with, serious violence
 - Frontline professionals working with the groups outlined above
- Engagement with agencies who were invited to contribute to this strategy but who did not respond.