City of London Serious Violence Duty strategy

Executive summary

The Police, Crime, Sentencing and Courts Act 2022 introduced a Duty on a specified list of public sector authorities[1] in all local government areas to work together and plan to prevent and reduce local serious violence. This document is the City of London's strategy for implementing the new Duty.

The City of London is in several respects a highly distinctive local government area. It is home to one of the world's most important financial centres, and as such has a temporary workday population over 65 times larger than its resident population of about 8,700 people, in an area of just over one square mile.

The small number of residents, coupled with generally very low levels of deprivation and low risk from most factors known to be associated with serious violence, means there is neither significant scope nor significant need to target areas such as housing, education, and employment that typically form part of a whole-system public health approach to reducing violence. As such, these do not feature in our strategy.

The City records the lowest volumes (and against its workday population by far the lowest rates) of serious violence of any London local authority. Where serious violence does occur, it is mainly linked to the City's night-time economy and most commonly involves assault without a weapon. While low in overall volume, the City has seen sustained increases in reports of some sexual offences, and hidden volumes of unreported violent retail crime is an area of concern. Volumes of the most serious violent crime such as rape, weapon-enabled violence and murder remain very low. In the context of low crime levels, however, any incidents of violent offending can have significant effects on public perceptions of safety.

The City Police (the City's dedicated territorial police service) and its partners are already focussed on the night-time economy and on tackling violence against women and girls. As such this strategy pursues proportionate and incremental improvements to those two priorities, in a framework targeting threats (potential perpetrators) and vulnerabilities (potential victims and locations of violent offending). These are supported by enabling measures to improve data sharing, gathering, and analysis.

Lastly, this strategy recognises that, to maintain low levels of serious violence, the City needs to be more proactive in identifying and mitigating risks that may emerge as the City changes in the medium-term – with a growing night-time economy, larger hotel and student populations, and changing volumes and patterns of footfall. A new dedicated cross-organisational 'future risks group' will focus on issues such as these. The overarching aim of this strategy is to reduce volumes of current serious violent offending and prevent the emergence of new types of serious violent offending in the City of London.

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[1] Chief Officers of police, fire and rescue authorities, Integrated Care Boards, Local Health Boards, local authorities, youth offending teams and probation services

Section 1 – Local context and summary of needs assessment analysis

Context

The City of London occupies 1.1 square miles in the heart of London. It is the smallest local authority in Britain and the smallest police force area, with a uniquely small residential population of c. 8,600 and a uniquely large temporary worker population of c. 587,00 a day, alongside millions of visitors a year. The analysis of risks and trends in local serious violence in this section is a summary of our more detailed strategic needs assessment, which is published separately. This strategy aligns with the priority in the City of London Corporation's current Corporate Plan that 'people are safe and feel safe' in the City.[2]

Risk factors

The City's residential population is, in general, significantly less deprived across income, education, employment, and health indices than national averages. Serious violence risk factors relating children, youth offending, social care, and people on probation are likewise low. The City has negligible (<5) resident adult offenders monitored by the probation service or children with cases with the Youth Justice Service. Risk factor data on substance misuse and domestic abuse rates in the resident population is more mixed, but again underlying volumes of people in drug treatment, or cases considered annually by the Multi-Agency Risk Assessment Conference (MARAC), are very low (<50 and <10 respectively).

Because the City's residential population is so small, this deprivation and risk factor analysis provides only a very partial indication of the risk of serious violence in the City. The small number of residents, along with generally low levels of identified risk, also means that a traditional whole-system public-health approach to reducing violence – such as measures on education, youth diversion, housing and employment – is of limited relevance in the City. At present, the vast majority of both victims and perpetrators of violence are non-resident.

Overview of crime

The City of London is in absolute and (compared against the workday population) relative terms the safest area of its size in London and one of the safest in the country, with an effective crime rate of 0.0016 per person per month. It has by a wide margin the lowest rates of serious violent crime in London (<1 per 1,000 people per year, against the workday population), and very few incidents of the most serious violent crimes such as homicide (<1 a year on average), rape (<25 a year), and knife- or firearm-enabled violence (<27 a year).

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[2] https://www.cityoflondon.gov.uk/about-us/plans-policies/corporate-plan Note that the City is currently developing a new Corporate Plan

Serious violence

The most significant driver of serious violence in the City is the night-time economy (NTE), with which over two-thirds of all recorded City crime (violent and non-violent) is associated. Three-fifths of violent crime occurs in peak NTE periods of Thursday – Saturday, 4pm-2am, and the three (out of 27) ward areas - those with the busiest night-time economies - account for a third of all recorded serious violence. It is important to emphasise that, compared to neighbouring areas, the City has a significantly safer night-time economy and that these figures demonstrate that in the context of otherwise low volumes of local crime, the NTE accounts for an outsize share of offending.

By a substantial margin the commonest type of local serious violence (within the City's definition of the term[3]) is violence with injury offences, which account for three-fifths of recorded serious violence. These are principally assaults, without weapons, occasioning actual bodily harm (c.70% of offences, 60 a quarter) or grievous bodily harm (c.10% of offences, 6 a quarter). Volumes have fluctuated in recent years (mainly due to lockdowns) but are currently in line with pre-Covid levels. Graph 1 below sets out volumes of serious violence in the City since 2018.

Volumes of sexual violence remain low but proportionately large increases have been seen in recent years. Volumes of reported rape offences for Q1 and Q2 2023 are 25% (+4 offences) higher than the equivalent period in 2018, other sexual offences are 56% (+23 offences) higher. While further analysis is needed, this is most likely due primarily to increased reporting rather than increased incidence. A similar trend, likely with similar explanation, has been seen with domestic abuse reports although volumes are again low with c.50 reports a quarter. Increased reporting of these offences have also been observed nationally.

An area of concern is assaults on security staff, which research suggests are under-reported, although we lack robust data on the scale of this issue in the City or on whether unreported offences would fall within our definition of serious violence.

Community views

While there are gaps in our understanding of the views of City communities, which this strategy seeks to address, available survey evidence shows that the City is perceived as very safe and that night-time safety is a priority (although ranks lower than, for example, anti-social behaviour). The most recent community survey conducted by the City Police found, in sentiment analysis, that visible policing presence in the night-time economy and CCTV

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[3] See *Performance Framework* annex for full definition

presence are positively associated with feeling safe. It found that worries of being a victim of crime mainly relate to non-violent crime, specifically phone thefts and bag-snatching.

Graph 1 – Summary of volumes of serious violence in the City of London
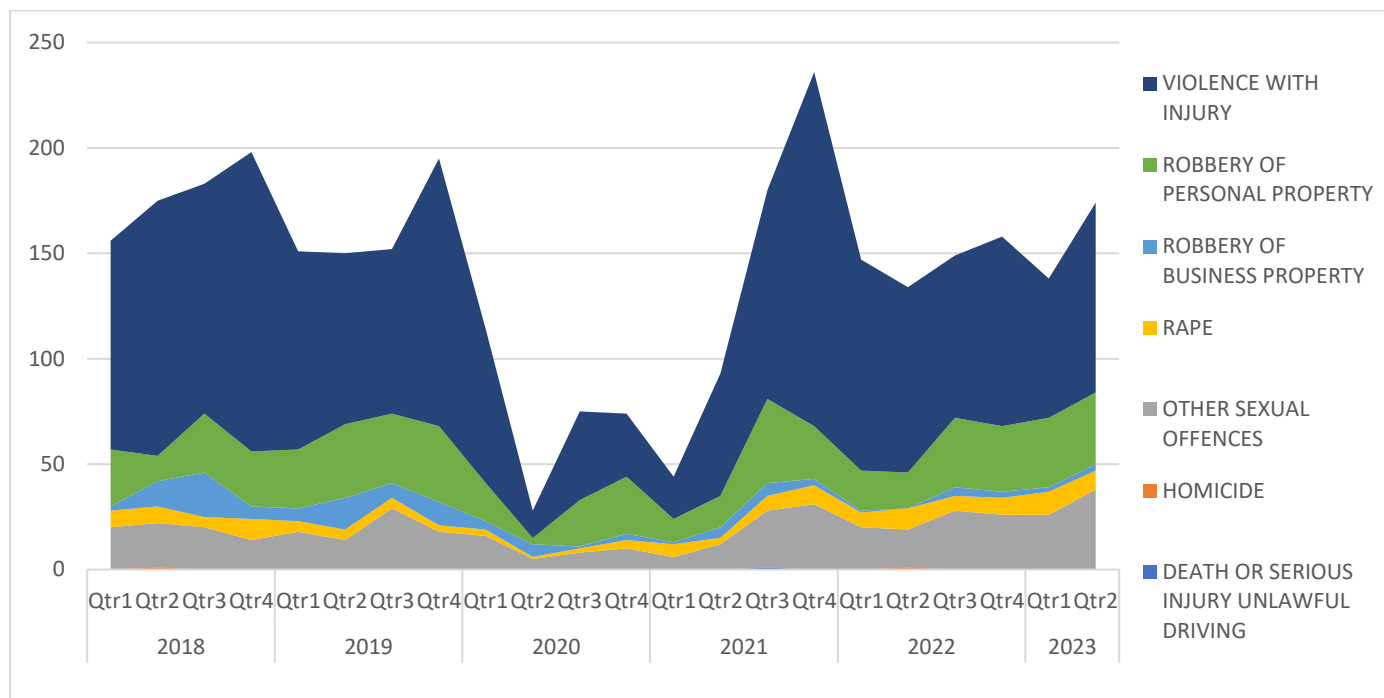
Summary of the conclusions of our strategic needs assessment

A) The very small size of the City's residential population, as well as generally low levels of risk identified within it, mean that **the strategy should focus on reducing threats and vulnerabilities associated with the City's much larger transient populations** – who constitute the vast majority of victims and perpetrators of local serious violence.

B) **The strategy's measures should be proportionate to the comparatively low rates and volumes of serious violent offending in the City**, while recognising that these are high-harm offences. In the context of limited available resources, and other significant local priorities such as reducing neighbourhood crime and the City's counter-terror work, the strategy should be careful not to over-allocate scarce resources to this issue.

C) **The strategy should focus on the night-time economy with which the majority of reported serious violence in the City is associated**. Alongside this, the City needs to deepen its understanding of community views, improve data-sharing between partner agencies, and closely monitor assaults on security staff, and retail crime more generally, to address issues of under-reporting.

D) **The strategy should include a focus on sexual violence and domestic violence.** There have been numerically small but proportionally significant increases in reports of some violent sexual offending, which are among the highest-harm types of serious violence seen in the City and where responses have an important link to trust and confidence in policing. In addition, the importance of tackling violence against women and girls has been recently underscored by its inclusion as a national threat in the latest Strategic Policing Requirement.

E) **The strategy should improve the City's forecasting and identification of medium-term risks around serious violence.** The City lacks a detailed, integrated, understanding of how medium-term changes – such as the expansion of leisure, culture, and night-time economy sectors, growth in hotel and student accommodation, and associated growing and changing footfall patterns – may change the landscape of serious violence risks. We need to be more forward-looking in identifying and mitigating emerging areas of risk.

Summary of the City of London's current approach to reducing serious violence

This is the City of London's first dedicated strategy on serious violence so while public and private sector organisations are currently delivering a wide range of violence reduction activity, it has not previously been within an overarching strategic framework. However, the current approach largely aligns with the priority areas identified in this strategy, with activity focussed on the night-time economy and multiple initiatives targeting violence against women and girls.

The City Police deliver hotspot policing focussed on known higher-risk areas, while its Specialist Operations directorate leads complex investigations, including cross-border pursuit of Organised Crime Groups supplying illicit drugs, a pilot addressing offending linked to mental health, and tackling offenders and supporting victims of sexual and domestic violence through a dedicated Public Protection Unit. The City Police also operate a Partnership and Problem-Solving Hub that focusses on repeat offenders, victims, and locations. The British Transport Police maintain a high-visibility presence in Liverpool Street station, conduct regular plain-clothes operations in stations and on trains terminating in the City, and work closely with the City Police.

This core policing work is supported by Operation Reframe: a partnership initiative that brings together the City Police, the Corporation's night-time economy functions (lighting, cleansing, anti-social behaviour and safeguarding), and a wide range of external organisations including night-time guardians, the Samaritans, and St John's Ambulance. This initiative seeks to build trust and confidence, improve the pursuit of perpetrators, and create safer spaces in the local night-time economy, all with a specific focus on tackling violence against women and girls.

The City Police are closely integrated into the Corporation's licensing operations, supporting engagement with licensed premises and ensuring a coordinated approach to monitoring

crime volumes and risk. The Corporation operates a 'traffic light' system monitoring the safety and operational standards of all City licensed premises, and the local 'Safety Thirst' scheme accredits those that have implemented best practice and adopted responsible management approaches.

The Corporation convenes local public and private sector partners in the Safer City Partnership (SCP) to address local crime and disorder priorities including serious violence – further detail on the SCP is given below. The Corporation's community safety team is also currently overseeing the SCP's 2018-2023 strategy to reduce violence against women and girls. At working level the City Police, multiple Corporation teams, and public sector partners identify and support vulnerable individuals through the community Multi-Agency Risk Assessment Conference (MARAC) and a vulnerability working group.

A wide range of private and civil society partners are also involved in tackling serious violence in the City. The City of London Crime Prevention Association, with over 300 members, bringing City security communities and wider groups involved with safety, security and operational responses together with the City Police. It is represented on the SCP and delivers a range of anti-violence initiatives, including several targeted at violence against women and girls. The City also works closely with the Safer Business Network to represent local business communities in plans and strategies to tackle violence affecting this sector.

Our strategy

Our strategy is defined by the three priority areas identified by our analysis of place, need, and risk on serious violence: the night time economy, sexual and domestic violence, and threats from a changing City. A fourth group of measures on data sharing, analysis, and information-gathering act as enablers of progress across all three priorities.

Our approach does not entail a significant shift in the core operational response of the City Police or the activity of the City Corporation and its statutory public sector partners. Instead, it aims to make incremental improvements by reducing threats of serious violence – through measures that target perpetrators, and vulnerabilities to serious violence – through measures that target potential victims and potential locations of these offences.

Enabling measures on data sharing, analysis, and information gathering

- We will improve data sharing between the City Police and partner organisations of the Safer City Partnership, underpinned by a new Data Sharing Agreement. Specifically, we will ensure that ambulance callout and hospital admission data are routinely incorporated into the City Police's hot-spotting analysis and patrol tasking in the Night-Time Economy, and improve the sharing of mental health information.

- Through the City Police's new survey platform we will conduct more regular and more sophisticated surveying of workers and visitors about night-time economy safety, informing risk analysis for tasking and our overall understanding of perceptions of safety.

- We will fund a part-time analyst in the Safer Business Network to collect, analyse, and map data from across the City business community on crime, with a focus on violence against women and girls, building a more detailed picture to inform operational responses and interventions, and the overall risk picture.

- The data sharing and survey changes listed above will also help build a better picture of sexual offending and community attitudes towards it, again supporting more targeted tasking and operational responses.

Priority area #1 – Violence in the night-time economy

Our first priority is to reduce serious violence associated with the City's night-time economy. We aim to deliver this by ensuring the operational response and day-to-day tasking of the City Police and partner organisations are informed by comprehensive data and risk analysis, mitigate risk by operating a robust and responsive licensing regime, and implementing other targeted preventative initiatives.

The City Police and local partners are already focussed on the night-time economy, and the specific areas of higher crime within it (Bishopsgate, Monument, Broad St) so there is not a need to significantly change our current approach. The measures set out here aim to increase the effectiveness of existing interventions rather than reinvent them, address specific known operational issues, take proportionate additional steps on visible presence and prevention which we know to be effective, and deepen our engagement with the worker and business communities who are the most at-risk groups.

<u>Measures that target threats</u>

- We will expand the use of community safety patrolling in the night-time economy, providing a visible security presence to deter potential perpetrators of serious violence and improve incident identification and response where offences occur.
- We will undertake a specific project to improve the functioning of 999 call handling and referrals from the Metropolitan Police to improve City Police response times to calls from City businesses and licensed premises during night-time economy hours
- Informed by better data sharing and analysis we will, over the course of 2024, conduct an assessment of the policing presence in the night-time economy, including options such as increased use of Special Constables and more frequent deployment of the Operation Reframe initiative.

<u>Measures that target vulnerabilities</u>

- We will help establish a partnership problem solving team, led by the Safer Business Network and involving Southwark, Westminster, and Lambeth councils to identify and respond to crime and disorder issues, including those linked to the night-time economy, focussing on crime hotspots on and around inner London bridges.
- We will continue to operate a robust 'traffic light' system for licensed premises and over 2024 will assess options to strengthen this further, including the merit of mandatory instillation of ID scanners in under-performing venues.
- We will reinstitute the 'Safety Thirst' scheme to promote safer practices in licensed City venues
- We will fund the reintroduction of the Taxi Marshalling scheme at Liverpool Street Station, providing an additional safe option for travel home from the City during night-time economy hours

Priority area #2 – Sexual violence and domestic violence

Our second priority is to reduce sexual and domestic violence. We aim to deliver this again by improving analysis and information-gathering, taking specific action to incrementally improve operational responses, and again deepening collaboration and engagement with businesses and workers who make up the large majority of victims and are at higher risk of victimisation. As a significant proportion of sexual offences are related to the night-time economy, measures under priority #1 will also contribute to reducing these offences.

These proposals build on the Safer City Partnership's existing Violence against Women and Girls strategy, which has already set out comprehensive measures on raising awareness, improving training and learning, improving support services, and strengthening partnerships. We are publishing a separate victims strategy which will set out plans to improve outcomes and experience for victims, including of violence against women and girls, so this document focuses on plans for data, operational responses, collaboration, and prevention, rather than the support provided after offences occur.

<u>Measures that targe threats</u>

- We will implement Operation Soteria Bluestone in the City Police to improve investigations and prosecutions for rape and serious sexual offences.
- We will expand the use of Touch DNA to gather more offender information on sexual violence offences and further improve investigative outcomes.
- We will undertake a short review of drink spiking offending in the City, considering the merits of a more focussed response including specifically the issuing of drink spiking test kits to officers.
- We will increase police engagement with the City hotel sector to improve identification of hidden harms in this area.

- We will undertake a detailed review of the City Police's capabilities to tackle violence against women and girls, against those set out in the new 2023 Strategic Policing Requirement which lists this as a national threat.
- We will fund the local implementation of the Project PIPA behavioural change programme for perpetrators of domestic abuse to improve rehabilitation and prevent repeat victimisation.

<u>Measures that target vulnerabilities</u>

- We will fund a full-time Business Engagement Officer in the Safer Business Network to work across the City Police, City Corporation and business and worker communities to monitor emerging trends, improve coordination of responses, and promote the rollout of anti-violence-against-women-and-girls initiatives including Ask for Angela, Safe Havens, and the Employers Initiative on Domestic Abuse.
- The City of London Corporation will also become a leading 'Beacon' member of EIDA and further promote uptake of the initiative throughout its business engagement.

Priority area #3 – A changing City

Our third priority is to ensure that we maintain low overall rates and volumes of serious violent offending by being proactive in identifying and responding to threats and risks that may emerge as the City changes in the medium-to-long term – such as from a growing night-time economy, higher overall footfall and changing footfall patterns from visitors and tourists, and larger populations of hotel guests and students.

We will deliver this by establishing a regular 'future risks group' within the Safer City Partnership. It will focus on:

- Bringing together the City Corporation's plans and ambitions for change with survey and census data to provide a holistic overview of the future shape of the City, and determine where this poses risks for crime and policing
- Improving the sharing and analysis of medium-term projections between the City Police, City Corporation, and statutory and business partners where relevant, to produce more detailed medium-term demand projections, including for serious violent offending
- Ensuring that overarching policy and strategy documents such as future Policing Plans, Force Management Statements, and Safer City Partnership strategies take full account of any identified risks and demand projections

To support this work, the City will commission a detailed assessment of the City's licensing landscape to understand how it has changed in recent years, the future direction of change, and risks this may pose to crime linked to the night-time economy.

Monitoring and evaluation

A performance framework setting out the metrics we will use to track our priorities is set out in an annex to this strategy.

The City's partnership structure for delivering the Serious Violence Duty – governance, roles and responsibilities, funding

The City of London's strategic needs assessment and strategy have been developed by, and will be implemented by, the Safer City Partnership – the name of our local community safety partnership. The City of London policing area (the geographical boundary of this strategy) and local government area are both within the Square Mile so there is an inherent alignment in pre-existing structures for developing and delivering this Duty. This strategy has been coordinated by the City of London Police Authority (the local PCC equivalent) and City of London Police.

The Safer City Partnership is composed of the City of London Police, representatives from across the City of London Corporation, partners from local NHS and public health, probation, and fire and rescue services, and a local business and security sector representative from the City of London Crime Prevention Association. As such, the Safer City Partnership's membership already mirrors the statutory partners set out in the Serious Violence Duty legislation, and it incorporates pre-existing links to local safeguarding arrangements such as the community MARAC.

It meets quarterly, with three sub-committees – focussed on priorities of serious violence, anti-social behaviour, and reoffending – meeting more regularly. The serious violence sub-committee will be the working-level delivery group for the strategy. The SCP is overseen by the Crime and Disorder Scrutiny Committee, composed of elected Members of the City's Court of Common Council (the local authority executive body).

The majority of measures set out in this strategy have only administrative costs and will be funded by a combination of existing budgets and, where relevant, Home Office grant funding to implement the Serious Violence Duty. The City of London has funded measures with additional resource cost from the Police Authority team budget and the Safer City Partnership's Proceeds of Crime Act allocations. These budgets, alongside Late Night Levy revenues, are the identified funding streams available for the SCP to deliver the Duty.

As required by the PCSC Act 2022, this strategy will be reviewed annually to decide if new actions are required or a revised strategy needed. As such, at this point there is no set duration for how long this strategy will be in place.

Performance Monitoring Framework

Priority	Metrics
Reduce serious violence in the night-time economy	Volume of serious violence offences* in night-time economy hours** (Q)***
	Volume of serious violence offences occurring in licensed premises (Q)
	Arrests for serious violence (Q)
	Hospital admissions from City for knife/sharp instrument wounds (Q)
	Number of outstanding high-harm suspects for serious violence offences (Q)
	Location heatmap of serious violence offences in night-time economy hours (A)
	Positive outcome rate for serious violence offences (A)
	Victim satisfaction for handling of serious violence offences (A)
	Proportion of survey respondents citing night-time economy as a crime / policing priority (Q)
	Licensed premises with Red / Amber / Green rating under City traffic-light monitoring scheme (Q)
Reduce sexual and domestic violence	Volume of sexual and domestic violence offences (Q)
	Location heatmap of sexual and domestic violence offences (A)
	Positive outcome rate for sexual and domestic violence offences (A)
	Victim satisfaction for handling of sexual and domestic violence offences (A)
	Proportion of survey respondents citing violence against women and girls as a crime / policing priority (Q)
Proactively identify and mitigate emerging risks and threats of serious violence	N/A – Progress will be monitored by ensuring that medium-term risk forecasts and demand projections are included in major publications where relevant, and through close scrutiny of the relative shares of constituent serious violent offences of our local definition.

(Enablers) Improve data sharing, analysis, and information gathering	N/A – Progress will be monitored by qualitative reports to the Duty implementation group. The Safer Business Network measure will, as a POCA-funded initiative, be subject to separate monitoring and evaluation.

* For the purposes of the Serious Violence Duty the City of London has adopted the following definition of serious violence:
"homicide, grievous bodily harm, actual bodily harm, rape, assault by penetration, sexual assault, personal robbery, threats to kill and violence against property caused during the commission of one of these offences, any sexual violence and domestic abuse, and notifiable knife and firearms offences"
**City-specific definition of 4pm – 6am
***(A) = annual metric, (Q) = quarterly metric, (M) = monthly metric