

City of London Corporation Committee Report

Committee(s): Crime and Disorder Scrutiny Committee – For Information	Dated: 14/11/2024
Subject: Serious Violence sub-group update	Public report: For Information
Report of: Town Clerk	
Report author: Charles Smart, Police Authority team	
This proposal: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• provides statutory duties	N/A
Does this proposal require extra revenue and/or capital spending?	No

Summary

This is a regular update on the recent work of the Safer City Partnership's (SCP) sub-group on serious violence, which is focussed on implementing the SCP's Serious Violence Duty strategy and rolling out £1m Home Office hotspot policing funding. It sets out that serious violence is rising (in line with wider crime), that the strategy is now 50% implemented, and that hotspot policing initiatives are part-mobilised

Recommendation

Members are asked to note the report.

Main Report

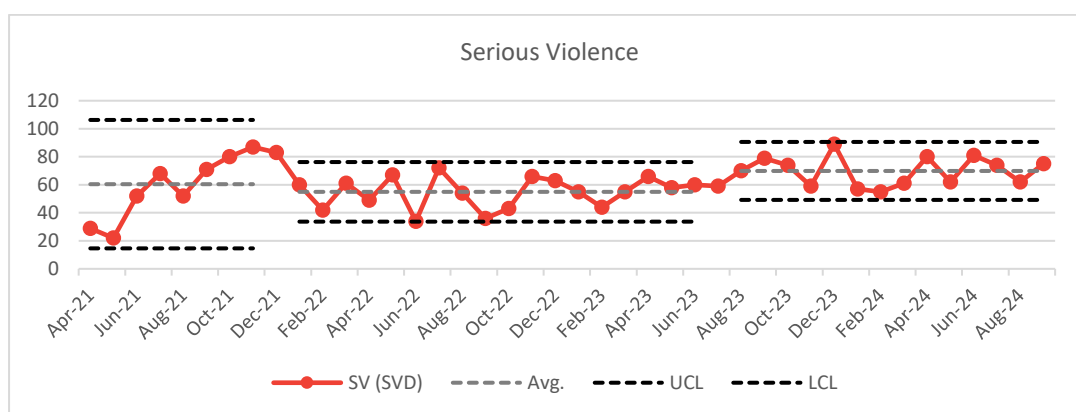
Background

1. In January 2024 the SCP published its Serious Violence Duty strategy (as required by recent legislation) with three priorities: reducing serious violence in the night-time economy, reducing sexual and domestic violence, and improving longer-term forecasting and mitigation of emerging risks.
2. Subsequently, the City received £1 million Home Office funding – from April 2024 to April 2025 – for hotspot policing initiatives to tackle serious violence and anti-social behaviour with a visible police presence.

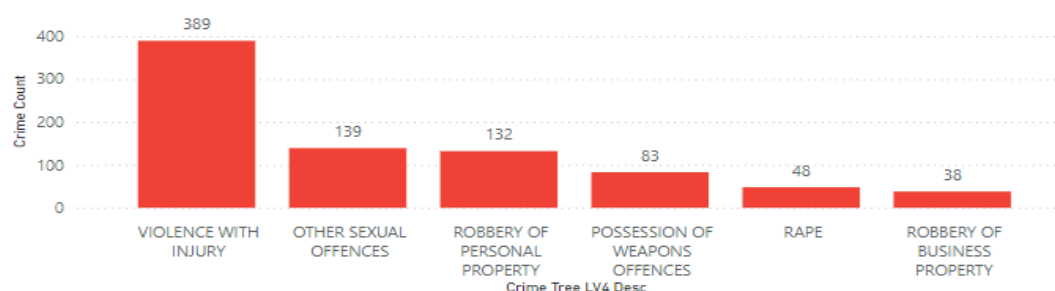
Current Position

Serious violence crime and performance

- Overall, serious violent crime has increased by 15.5% (+111 offences) year-on-year to date (Sept 2024), slightly above the 14.2% increase in all City crime. This is mainly driven by violence with injury (+51), robbery of business property (+27) and rape offences (+15).
- Notable is the new (since November 2022) offence of ‘administering a drug with intent to commit indictable offence’ – aka drink spiking – which is driving recent increases in violence with injury offences. Overall, most injury offences remain assault occasioning actual bodily harm.



Crime x LV4 Desc (Oct 23 - Sept 24)



- Year-on-year, the positive outcome rate¹ has increased by 7.5% to 23.4%, including a significant (+13.8%) increase in positive outcomes for sexual offences. The large majority (75%) of serious violent offences continue to occur in night-time economy hours and are concentrated in NTE locations – 5 wards² account for 48% of recorded serious violence, with 8 streets within these accounting for a quarter of all serious violence in the City.
- A more detailed performance assessment is included as a non-public annex, due to sensitivities in data. Overall, the key conclusions are that while serious violence is rising it is doing so in line with wider crime, and performance on investigating offences and bringing offenders to justice is also improving. Some recent (low volume) increases in sexual offending may indicate an emerging trend – a deep-dive into this has been commissioned to understand it further.

¹ Proportion of recorded offences resulting in a ‘positive outcome’ such as a charge or summons

² Bishopsgate, Tower, Castle Baynard, Farringdon Within, Farringdon Without

7. Lastly, it is important to note that we have not yet seen the full impact of recent hotspot policing initiatives – as detailed below, these are still being rolled out.

Serious Violence Duty strategy delivery

8. Of our strategy's 21 measures, 12 (57%) have been delivered. The status of the 9 incomplete measures is set out below. Of these, five require updates from leads or others, two have been paused for wider reasons, two require more engagement or escalation with partners.

Measure	Deadline	Status	Next steps
Improve data-sharing between City Police and partner organisations, with focus on health data	Mar-25	Discussion with NHS suggests this should be paused - wider work is underway to improve violence-related data sharing but we cannot influence scope and pace of this	Need to clarify exactly what health data is received & used by City Police at present
Night-time economy			
Conduct assessment of uniformed presence and deployments in the night-time economy	Sep-24	Paused due to announcement of hotspot funding – will be done later to account for this work	Wait until full data on hotspot impacts is available
Hotels given training on recognising vulnerability and exploitation	Jul-24	Hotel forum planned for Summer 2024 but not confirmed if this was delivered	Awaiting update from lead officer
Sexual and domestic violence			
Implement Operation Soteria Bluestone	N/A	Sits outside SV strategy as a pre-existing commitment. Current status not known	Awaiting update from lead officer
Undertake short review of drink-spiking offences	Sep-24	Near-complete. Review paper drafted and awaiting agreement on conclusions	Awaiting review by City Police
Increase police engagement with the hotel sector	Oct-24	Ambition for this to be led by Dedicated Ward Officers, awaiting update	Awaiting update from lead officer
Undertake detailed review of City Police VAWG capabilities	N/A	This sits outside SV strategy as a separate obligation under 2023 Strategic Policing Requirement. Return submitted to HMICFRS, awaiting response	Await response from HMICFRS
Explore options for local implementation of Project PIPA behavioural change programme	Aug-24	Volumes too low to set up bespoke City scheme, talks ongoing with MOPAC on joining a pan-London one.	Continue to engage MOPAC
Mitigate future risks			

Establish a 'future risks group'	Nov-24	Prospective members identified and Terms of Reference drafted and shared, but struggling to get any participation	Continue to pursue participants, escalate
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£1m hotspot response projects

9. The City is funding eight projects³ with its grant. With funding only confirmed for a year (to April 2025), this is by necessity mainly funding police overtime to deliver more patrols. As of the end of Q2 (September), actual spend is running about 50% below forecast – due largely to other unexpected pressures (such as protests over the summer) and the inherent difficulty in rapidly increasing overtime work among a small number of frontline officers.
10. Work is underway to maximise use of remaining grant over the financial year, and a major component – rollout of Operation Vigilant patrols, a quarter of all forecast spend – is now live.

Key overall issues and risks for the sub-group

11. As above, serious violent crime is increasing, although to a degree this should be expected in line with rising City footfall and busyness of the night-time economy. In addition to closely monitoring the data and impact of hotspot policing initiatives, the sub-group will be reviewing its strategy by January 2025 (in line with legislative requirements). This – alongside wider work on the SCP strategy and next Policing Plan – presents a good opportunity to consider what additional measures may be taken, subject to available resource.
12. For the current strategy itself, the key issue is the struggle to set up the 'future risks group', and so to better identify and mitigate emergent risks. Engagement continues at working level and escalation is being explored.
13. For the hotspot projects, the key issue is delivering in line with forecast spend. While – as above – work is underway to maximise spend and delivery up to 1 April (when funding ceases), inherent issues with capacity to increase overtime will remain. Issues with logging precise patrol locations have been identified and now rectified but mean it will be very difficult to evaluate the exact impact of the first 6 months of activity.

Conclusion

³ Operation Vigilant NTE patrols, CCTV monitoring staff, anti-theft patrols, cycle team patrols, Dedicated Ward Officer patrols, taxi hire checks, project analyst, Parkguard patrols (transfer to other initiative)

14. Progress continues on strategy implementation and rollout of hotspot initiatives, though barriers remain on both. Serious violent crime is rising, but there are upcoming opportunities to review our approach and consider additional action.

Appendices

- Appendix – None – [additional data in non-public annex, separately]

Charles Smart

Policy Officer, Police Authority team

E: charles.smart@cityoflondon.gov.uk