

# City of London Corporation Committee Report

<b>Committees:</b> Crime and Disorder Scrutiny Committee Safer City Partnership	<b>Dated:</b> <b>29 May 2025</b> <b>30 May 2025</b>
<b>Subject:</b> Community Safety delivery in the City of London	<b>Public report:</b>  For Information
<b>This proposal:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• <b>delivers Corporate Plan 2024-29 outcomes</b></li><li>• <b>provides statutory duties</b></li></ul>	Vibrant Thriving Destination Providing Excellent Services
<b>Does this proposal require extra revenue and/or capital spending?</b>	Yes
<b>If so, how much?</b>	£tbc
<b>What is the source of Funding?</b>	tbc
<b>Has this Funding Source been agreed with the Chamberlain's Department?</b>	No – but this process is in train
<b>Report of: Judith Finlay – Executive Director of Community and Children's Services</b>	
<b>Report author: Simon Cribbens – Assistant Director, Community and Children's Services</b>	

## Summary

This report describes the need for an expanded and changed Community Safety function within the City Corporation to respond to changing demands and context, and to mitigate the strategic and operational constraints of the current model. It proposes a direction of travel, in which an expanded function strengthens the ability of the City Corporation to fulfil its partnership working with the City of London Police to tackle crime and disorder.

## Recommendation

Members are asked to:

- Note the report.

## Main Report

### Background

1. Community Safety is a partnership approach to reduce crime and disorder in local communities, requiring both strategic and operational input from partners – notably the local authority and local police.
2. The strategic underpinning of this approach was formalised by the introduction of 'Community Safety Partnerships' in the Crime and Disorder Act 1998 to bring together local partners to formulate and implement strategies to tackle crime, disorder and antisocial behaviour (ASB) in their communities.
3. A Community Safety Partnership is made up of representatives from the police, local authority, and the fire, health and probation services (known as responsible authorities). It works on the principle that no single agency can address all drivers of crime and antisocial behaviour. In the City of London the partnership is known as the Safer City Partnership (SCP).
4. Local authorities are the key drivers and co-ordinators of these local strategies and carry a range of legal duties in this area. Almost every local authority in England and Wales will deliver its community safety responsibilities through a dedicated Community Safety Team (CST). The size and role of such teams will vary depending on local drivers and priorities. Roles include facilitating the statutory strategic partnership, devising complex multi-agency plans and strategies, commissioning of the local strategic assessment of crime and disorder, engaging communities, and providing an operational response to a broad variety of issues from ASB to preventing serious violence.
5. Local authorities have a range of powers – such as Community Protection Notices and Public Space Protection Orders - that enable them to operate alongside or in co-ordination with the police to tackle issues such as ASB.
6. As with any other local authority, the City Corporation must comply with a broad range of statutory functions both in terms of its provision of a Community Safety Partnership and a variety of other legislation including, but not limited to, Prevent, Serious Violence and Domestic Abuse.

## **Current Position**

7. The City Corporation spends £0.43m annually on Community Safety and has the smallest community safety function in London. The average local authority spend in the capital on Community Safety is £2.7m. This reflects the unique characteristics of the City of London, with a very small resident population and large daytime working population. The City is also unique in London in having its own police force and Police Authority Board.
8. The Square Mile does not share the scale and breadth of issues experienced in other London local authority areas. However, many of the crime and disorder issues facing the City are common across local authorities with significant business districts and night-time economies - including theft, aggressive begging, alcohol-related crime and disorder, and violence against women and girls.

9. The current resourcing and established structure of the City Corporation's CST (one manager, three community safety officers and administrative support) reflects a historic approach which focusses on the strategic and co-ordinating roles and functions. The operational response to issues such as ASB has rested with the police, or those services within the City Corporation that exercise specific powers such as those in relation to noise, licencing and ASB on housing estates.
10. The CST sits within the Department of Community and Children's Services, but works across and delivers alongside services in other departments – particularly City Operations, Port Health and Public Protection and the Police Authority Board.
11. The Community Safety function is being delivered in a changing context. There has been a significant and continuing growth in the nighttime economy with which much of the City's ASB and crime and disorder is associated. The City has also seen a significant increase in encampments of rough sleeping – with which there are also associated ASB issues.
12. In this changing environment there has been a growing expectation on the team to respond more tactically and operationally. The constraints of the current model – and the limitation that imposes on the team - have caused frustration with partners, notably the City of London Police.
13. Changing demand and needs has not been met with changed resource. Therefore, the CST has been unable to deliver to the level it wishes to, and that would best meet community and partner needs. It presents the risk that the City Corporation could fall short of meeting all its statutory duties, or providing adequate protection or prevention in some crime and disorder issues.
14. There has also been a growing focus, including by central Government, on the issue of reducing violence, and violence against women and girls in particular. These are priorities under the current SCP strategy. There is a good deal of activity in this space in the City. But the crime figures are going in the wrong direction (the City Police reported to the most recent Strategic Planning and Performance (Police) Committee in February 2025 that violent crime in the City has increased by an average of 9% each quarter since Q3 2022/23, with violence against women and girls increasing by an average of 3% per quarter over the same period. Volumes of rape and other sexual offences are currently 38% higher than the high crime year of 2019/20.
15. It remains the case that compared with other areas of the country, the City is a safe place – and is not blighted by some of types of crime (such a knife crime) which other local authorities experience. The City's small population and low levels of crime and disorder have mitigated this risk. However, there is need for the City Corporation – through its CST – to play a fuller part in contributing to a truly effective partnership approach with the City Police to ensure that the City remains safe, and that residents, workers and visitors feel safe.

16. In response to the challenges set out, a review of the CST's partnership working with the City Police was commissioned to identify how the CST can effectively fulfil its statutory and operational responsibilities while maintaining a productive partnership with the City Police.

### **Review of partnership working with City of London Police**

17. The review was undertaken by a specialist community safety consultant who had previous knowledge and experience of the city's community safety delivery.

18. In its summary the report concludes that:

*The City Corporation needs to consider its preferred direction for the CST. If the expectation upon the CST is to remain – that is, to fulfil the entirety of the strategic and operational tasks incumbent upon any London local authority – then the Corporation must resource the CST adequately. This is not just a matter of funding additional posts, but to invest in the training and support of existing staff and processes to ensure they are able to deliver the entirety of the required functionality.*

19. The report highlights three key areas of development.

**Operational response to issues of ASB:** *Operational activity, in particular around ASB, is causing the most friction between partners as the team is expected to have similar resourcing levels to other community safety teams in London and the surrounding area. Currently, this is not the case.*

**Analytical capacity:** *The lack of analytical capacity is a severe issue for the CST and wider partnership. The CST has had limited access to analytical products and unlike other City and COLP partners. As a result, there is no analytical resource to influence strategic commissioning, partnership activity, or problem solving, and little in the way of evaluation or performance management as a result.*

**Engagement:** *Engagement with business and residential communities by the CST is lacking due to the capacity issues outlined above, and there is a need for better collaboration to address crime and disorder issues, both in terms of a short-term tactical response, and in long term strategic planning to address future risks.*

20. The report concludes that the CST's operational delivery is challenged by a lack of resources; as a result, there is a focus on strategic work rather than actual delivery. It notes that:

*There is a case to be made for the CST to become a purely strategic function, supporting the SCP, administering subgroups, and commissioning services through both direction setting and procurement; and leaving operational activity to either be administered by the City of London Police or by another department*

*within the City Corporation, although this might fragment the City Corporation's approach to an even greater extent.*

21. However, the report recommends an enlarged CST that resources both strategic and operational activity.

## **Proposals and next steps**

22. A report to the City Corporation's Senior Leadership Team in March set out the case for developing the Community Safety function - and therefore the CST - to enable it to meet operational and strategic needs, and strengthen its capacity to work with key partners, especially the City of London Police. The report – and the approach it recommends – received strong support.
23. The CST also successfully bid for Proceeds of Crime Act funding to secure an additional one-year post. This role will focus on ASB associated with hotspots and encampments of street homeless people – and other street based ASB issues. The officer – who has already joined the team – will work closely with colleagues across the City Corporation and the City Police.
24. Officers will work with the Chamberlain and Members to seek additional resourcing to respond to the recommendations of the review and deliver the ambition of the CST to work more closely with the City Police. It is estimated that recommended level of resourcing could cost £220,000 per annum. However, this figure is indicative, and further work will be necessary to define the exact requirements.

## **Corporate & Strategic Implications**

25. *Strategic implications* – the proposal deliver to the Corporate Plan 2024-2029 and the Safer City Partnership Strategy.
26. *Financial implications* – it is estimated that additional roles and functions within the CST could cost £220,000.
27. *Resource implications* – an expanded CST role may require greater support from the City Corporation's legal team and communications team.
28. *Legal implications* – increased capacity, and closer working with the City Police, will strengthen the City Corporation's ability to meet its legal duties. The City Corporation must comply with a broad range of statutory functions both in terms of its provision of a Community Safety Partnership and a variety of other legislation including, but not limited to, Prevent, Serious Violence and Domestic Abuse.
29. *Risk implications* – The under-resourcing of the CST creates a risk – both to the community and the City Corporation – that the City Corporation may fail to meet

its statutory duties, or provide adequate protection or prevention in some crime and disorder issues. These both present a reputational risk.

30. *Equalities implications* – effective community safety provides a positive impact on people protected by existing equality legislation, some of whom are overrepresented among those impact by crime and disorder.

31. Climate implications – none.

32. Security implications – none.

## **Conclusion**

33. This report emphasizes the need for an expanded and changed Community Safety function within the City Corporation to respond to evolving demands and context. It highlights the importance of strengthening the partnership with the City of London Police to tackle crime and disorder effectively. The report recommends an enlarged Community Safety Team (CST) that resources both strategic and operational activities to ensure the City Corporation can fulfil its statutory duties and provide adequate protection and prevention in crime and disorder issues

## **Appendices**

- None

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