

TITLE	Combatting Drugs Partnership
FOR CONSIDERATION BY	Community and Corporate Overview and Scrutiny Committee on 23 January 2023
WARD	None-Specific;
LEAD OFFICER	Director, Adult Social Care - Matt Pope

OUTCOME / BENEFITS TO THE COMMUNITY

'The Combatting Drugs Partnership (CPD) is a Berkshire West partnership formed in response to the Governments new drug strategy 'From Harm to Hope'. The aim of the CDP is to set the direction and actions plan required by local and system partners to deliver against the framework. This supports Wokingham's Community Safety Partnership (CSP) priorities around reducing crime and substance use.

The CDP is overseen by Wokingham's CSP and has been running for six months. This report outlines the progress of the CDP and how this aligns with the local drug and alcohol strategy and priorities.

The Combatting Drugs Partnership (CDP) are six months into this arrangement, this report outlines the progress and outcomes achieved to date.

RECOMMENDATION

That the Committee notes the content of the report and the work achieved to date, reviews next steps and offers comment.

SUMMARY OF REPORT

The report provides a summary of the formation of the CDP and it's progress to date to helping to deliver Wokingham's requirements as outline in the new Harm to Hope strategy.

Public Health initiated the new Substance Misuse Strategy as the current Strategy expires in 2024. In light of the direction given by National Government it was agreed the Wokingham strategy would be paused whilst the required needs assessment and subsequent action plan were developed as this would lead the work required across Berkshire West and locally.

The action plan developed and agreed within the CDP is now at the implementation stage and will need to be progressed with key partners including TVP, Probation, Health etc. etc. At the last CDP meeting on the 11th January 2023, it was agreed that CSPs were best placed to take the implementation of local delivery forward, due to well established frameworks for partnership delivery already in place. Local arrangements for the delivery and governance are to be finalised due course.

Background

Combatting Drugs Partnership 2022

In 2021, a two-part independent review of drugs was undertaken by Dame Carol Black. [Part One](#) identified the scale of the national drugs problems, with an illicit drugs market with an annual value of £10 billion, and 3 million users accessing a supply chain that is increasingly violent and exploitative. The societal cost of illicit drug use is of £19.3 billion per year, 86% attributable to health and crime related costs. [Part two](#) reviewed the current situation with prevention, treatment, and recovery, which the report concluded were not fit for purpose, and the need for significant investment to resolve the many issues highlighted.

[Harm to Hope, a 10 year drugs plan to cut crime and save lives](#) was launched in December 2021, taking the recommendations from the Dame Carol Black review into a strategic plan supported by grant funding, and system wide responsibilities. The plan has three key areas of focus:

1. Break the drugs supply chain

Combatting “county lines” and organised crime groups

2. Deliver a world – class treatment and recovery system

Investing in drug treatment and recovery, driving standards and consistency

3. Achieve a shift in the demand for recreational drugs

Deter adults from using recreational drugs, prevent young people from starting drugs

On 15th June 2022, the [Drug strategy guidance for local delivery partners](#) was published, outlining responsibilities over the next 6 months for local areas to establish the structures and work programmes needed in their areas to start to deliver on the 10 year plan. Areas are required to have a new statutory **Combatting Drugs Partnership** to successfully address the harms caused by illicit drugs.

The Office of the Police Crime Commissioner across the OPCC footprint met to consider the expectations. Discussions also took place to consider other footprints with possible geographic areas to establish the Combatting Drugs Partnership. Discussions were held with senior officers and the Chairs of the Community Safety Partnership to propose that the new partnership operate at a Berkshire West level across the three local authorities. The SRO is the Director of Public Health who already has accountability to the three organisations, and the Chair was nominated from the Community Safety Partnerships. Membership of the partnership is across the system.

The information and strategic direction on drugs and alcohol is variable across Berkshire West currently. The mandate to deliver against the criteria presented by Dame Carol Black is, as well as establishing a partnership, that a comprehensive needs assessment was undertaken, and an action plan was in place by December 2022. This has been written as a Berkshire West action plan with individual requirements for the three local authorities. This will be presented for sign off at the next CDP meeting in January 2023. The action plan will be ready for consideration in April 2023.

The Public Health grant is used to ensure provision of services to support people to recover from misuse of drug and alcohol. Additional government grant funding has

been provided to these services, to support delivery of the strategic ambitions set out in the 10-year plan. The individual money awarded to Wokingham for this work outside of the Public Health grant is £83,007 per annum for 3 years.

There will be a requirement of other members on the Combatting Drugs Partnership to undertake additional work programmes and commission/ deliver additional services. It is anticipated funding for this will flow directly from central government to the relevant organisation/s.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS OF THE RECOMMENDATION

The Council faces severe funding pressures, particularly in the face of the COVID-19 crisis. It is therefore imperative that Council resources are focused on the vulnerable and on its highest priorities.

	How much will it Cost/ (Save)	Is there sufficient funding – if not quantify the Shortfall	Revenue or Capital?
Current Financial Year (Year 1)	0	N/A	N/A
Next Financial Year (Year 2)	0	N/A	N/A
Following Financial Year (Year 3)	0	N/A	N/A

Other financial information relevant to the Recommendation/Decision

N/A

Public Sector Equality Duty

An equalities assessment was undertaken in February 2021.

Climate Emergency – ***This Council has declared a climate emergency and is committed to playing as full a role as possible – leading by example as well as by exhortation – in achieving a carbon neutral Wokingham Borough by 2030***

There will be no impact as a result of this decision on the Council's carbon neutral objective.

List of Background Papers

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/review-of-drugs-phase-one-report/review-of-drugs-summary>
<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/review-of-drugs-phase-two-report/review-of-drugs-part-two-prevention-treatment-and-recovery>
https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/1079147/From_harm_to_hope_PDF.pdf
<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/drugs-strategy-guidance-for-local-delivery-partners>

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