Safer Exeter Meeting

Safer Exeter Priorities 2026/27

- Hate Crime
- Violence Against Women & Girls
- City Centre
- Anti-Social Behavior Action Team

Meeting

- Community Safety Partnership - Executive
- Monday 30 March 2026 at 10.00 am

Meeting Details

Chair	Ian Collinson (Exeter City Council)
Deputy Chair	Jon Cooke (CoLab) Superintendent Ryan Doyle (Devon & Cornwall Police)
Company attendees	Devon & Cornwall Police Inclusive Exeter Exeter City Council Safer Devon Partnership University of Exeter InExeter Devon & Somerset Fire & Rescue Service Exeter City Councillor Met Office
Company apologies	CoLab Exeter Exeter City Council Exeter College Devon County Council

Agenda Items

9. Reappointment of Chair and Deputy Chairs

The following appointments were agreed for the next two years:

- Chair – Ian Collinson, Exeter City Council
- Deputy Chair – Superintendent Ryan Doyle, Devon & Cornwall Police
- Deputy Chair - Jon Cooke, Deputy CEO, CoLab

10. Minutes of last meeting - 20 January 2026

The minutes of the meeting held on 20 January 2026 were agreed.

11. Action Log

The Action Log was noted and would be updated post meeting.

12. Action Plan 2025/26

The Action Plan for 2025/26 was noted, and the new Action Plan for 2026-2028 would be considered under Item 5 of the agenda.

13. Revised Safer Exeter Terms of Reference and 2026/27 Priorities

It was reported that changes were required to the Safer Exeter Terms of Reference and priorities for the following reasons:

- Delivery of actions arising from the current Safer Exeter Action Plan.
- Evidence and data from the Community Safety Strategic Assessment.
- Requirements to follow national guidance for Community Safety Partnerships.
- Recommendations from an internal audit on Community Safety

The Terms of Reference had been revised for the Executive Group and the Management Group, the two main groups for Safer Exeter, and the following key points were made:

- The Terms of Reference reflected the statutory responsibilities of the partnership and avoided duplication with Safer Devon.
- It included the requirement for at least one public meeting per year, which will be programmed into the City Council's Customer Focus Scrutiny Committee timetable.
- A new three-year action plan will be implemented.
- Membership had been separated into Crime & Disorder partners and non-Crime & Disorder partners to manage confidential and sensitive information appropriately.
- Elected Member representation continued across both groups to ensure democratic accountability and political leadership, with a focus on portfolio holders for safety and communities.
- Local Government Reorganisation (LGR) is expected to affect Safer Exeter, with governance changes from April 2028. Business as usual will continue until then.

Reference was made to pages 57–60 of the agenda pack which summarised the key findings of the Community Safety Strategic Assessment relevant to Exeter and the impacts on communities, residents and neighbourhoods. Two versions of this had been circulated; one for Crime & Disorder Partners and one for non-Crime & Disorder partners, the latter containing non-sensitive crime data. The report highlighted that crime in Exeter had increased by 16% between 2023/24 and 2024/25. It was noted, however, that the 2024/25 data should be interpreted with caution due to improvements in crime recording practices across the force and it should be considered alongside the national picture.

The following areas were highlighted:

Shop Theft

- Shop theft was a major driver of the overall increase in crime.
- Proactive initiatives such as hotspot policing, the new Community Safety Team, and enhanced reporting via InExeter would have an impact on data.
- A new reporting platform was introduced by Exeter Businesses Against Crime.
- Due to a focus on the city centre, theft had spread to community shopping areas outside of the City Centre. The Community Safety Team will help address this once recruitment is complete as they will expand to cover these areas.

- The increase is also reflected in the national picture.

Burglary
- Concerns were noted around burglaries committed by individuals aged 18–25.
- Evidence indicates links to drug-related activity or addiction.

Sexual Offences
- Rising levels in Exeter.
- Alcohol and the evening and night-time economy are key contributing factors.
- The expanded CCTV network, yellow Need Help signs, the Exeter Sexual Assault Centre, and multi-agency work via CoLab supporting women and girls, are the foundations in place to address this area of activity.
- The number of male victims is increasing, particularly those aged under 18.
- Adult sexual exploitation remains under-reported.
- It was noted that approximately 8% of the increase in recorded sexual offences was due to enhanced working practices and improved recording processes.
- An increase in reports from under 18s had also been noted, although it was unclear whether this reflected a genuine shift in attitudes or other factors. The figures represent city-wide data, whereas the Community Safety Charter focused specifically on the city centre and should be considered in that context.

Hate Crime
- There had been an increase in Exeter, contrary to the wider Devon trend.
- Exeter's distinctive geographical, economic and demographic profile along with its large and diverse student population may be factors in this increase.
- Focus going forward will include race, religion, disability and LGBTQ related offences.
- Evening and night-time related hate crime is more prevalent in Exeter than elsewhere in Devon.
- Hotspots include Sidwell Street, High Street and Fore Street which link to where drinking and takeaway venues are located.
- Offenders are most commonly within the early-20s age bracket.
- Under-reporting remains a concern.

Serious Violence
- Knife crime rose during the period analysed but has since reduced.
- Youth-related serious violence (under 18s) is rising.
- Most incidents occur in public spaces, affecting residential neighbourhoods.
- More work is needed on the drivers of youth serious violence and place-based solutions to address this.
- Young people are being linked to commercial burglaries and serious organised crime.

Anti-Social Behaviour (ASB)
- ASB increased across the whole city.
- Increases related to rowdy/inconsiderate behaviour, nuisance neighbours and street drinking.
- High Street and Sidwell Street remain city centre hotspots.
- Street drinking and substance use had been raised by city partners.

Drugs
- Drug related intelligence submitted to the police is the highest in Exeter.
- Drug activity has broad impacts on communities including shop theft, ASB and overdose deaths.

- Strong links exist with serious organised crime, cuckooing, serious violence, knife related crime, sexual exploitation and coercion.

Based on the evidence presented, four priorities were proposed for the next three years:

1. Hate Crime
2. Violence Against Women and Girls
3. ASB Action team (communities and neighbourhoods)
4. City Centre

These changes will result in:

- A new focus for Safer Exeter.
- New working groups.
- Potential new membership across Safer Exeter and its working groups.
- New Terms of Reference for all working groups.

A draft Action Plan was included in the agenda pack, which had been formed from recommendations in the Community Safety Strategic Assessment. Potential organisations to sit on the working groups were highlighted within the terms of reference, although membership may evolve and change.

Members were asked to consider their organisation's expertise and submit nominations for membership of the four working groups.

The next steps were outlined as follows:

- The new working groups would be convened.
- The draft Action Plan would be further developed, additional research would be carried out where evidence and data gaps remain.
- Performance and monitoring measures to monitor activity would be established.
- Partners to ensure that appropriate stakeholders were identified for each action.

The following additional points were raised:

- The Police would continue to chair the Anti-Social Behaviour Action Team (ASBAT).
- Chairs were sought for the other working groups.
- Each working group would report into the Management Group.
- The PSPO boundary would be used to define the City Centre priority area, and this would be included within the terms of reference.
- Drug crime would be included in the City Centre priority.
- The Action Plan would be a live organic document and would respond to new data and assessments.
- A recruitment process is underway for a Community Safety Team Supervisor and Manager to provide coordination and leadership on activity.
- The Action Plan and terms of reference for working groups would be placed on the Safer Exeter website for transparency.

14. ASB Powers

The report attached to the agenda outlined the ongoing work through Safer Devon to develop a consistent approach to the issuing of Community Protection Warnings (CPWs) for addressing anti-social behaviour (ASB) and criminal activity across Devon.

It was noted that Appendix 3 provided case studies from other Community Safety Partnerships (CSPs) within Devon that were already utilising these powers to respond to ASB and criminal behaviour.

A proposal was presented for Safer Exeter to adopt the ASB Escalation Process, including the issuing of ASB letters, Acceptable Behaviour Contracts (ABCs), Community Protection Warnings (CPWs), Community Protection Notices (CPNs), and Fixed Penalty Notices (FPNs). These powers were already available to the Police, certain City Council officers, and registered housing providers. This is to support a consistent approach to tackling ASB and criminal activity within Exeter.

Under the proposal, authorisation to issue powers within the ASB Escalation Process would also be granted to the Community Safety Team Supervisor and the Community Safety Partnership Manager.

The report included a table summarising ASB and criminal activity being addressed across Safer Devon. The data had been broken down to align with the proposed Safer Exeter new priorities, with ASB activity covering both the City Centre and neighbourhood-based working groups.

Part of this work would also explore additional tools available including ASB Case Reviews, Community Remedy, Neighbourhood Watch, Criminal Behaviour Orders and Closure Powers.

Safer Exeter would follow the principles established by the National ASB Board for consistency.

Attention was drawn to Appendix 2, which set out upcoming ASB-related changes to the Crime and Policing Bill and the impact for Safer Exeter, including the introduction of Respect Orders.

It was considered that the ASB escalation approach would be adopted but supported by the Safer Devon Working Group which is developing additional practice guidance and templates to assist implementation. Monitoring would be put in place.

Agreed that Safer Exeter would adopt the ASB Escalation Process as outlined above and in the report once additional detail and clarity on working practices had been provided by Safer Devon.

15. Safe Space update - Chair to provide a verbal update

A verbal update was provided on the Safe Space:

- CoLab had offered to hold a bank account on behalf of the Safe Space.
- EasyMed would provide the medical services at no cost using volunteer staff.
- EasyMed had also expressed interest in establishing a dedicated CiC as their charitable arm and to assume responsibility for the day-to-day operation of the Safe Space.
- Proposed opening times to be Friday and Saturday evenings.
- A response was awaited from St Stephen's Church regarding the booking of the venue.
- Stagecoach had indicated an interest in supporting the initiative.

A discussion was held on long-term funding and sustainability for the Safe Space. It was considered that the initiative should be managed as a defined project, including coordinated daily oversight, effective communication, business engagement, evaluation, and funding applications.

It was **agreed** that:

(1) A newly defined project brief outlining clear tasks and outcomes would be drafted; and
(2) The CSP Chair would provide oversight of the Safe Space, supported by the Community Safety Manager until the transition to the newly proposed CiC.

16. Police Reform White Paper

An update was provided on the Police Reform White Paper as follows:

- The White Paper was published earlier this year.
- A new National Police Service is proposed, bringing all national bodies together under a single organisation.
- A proposal paper is due to be submitted to the Home Office by August 2026 outlining potential options for the number of forces and their size and boundaries.
- There is currently no indication what this means for Devon.
- The White Paper emphasises that future policing delivery is intended to remain focused at a local policing level.
- New arrangements are expected to align with existing partnership boundaries.
- The OPCC model will be ending in 2028.

It was also suggested that a similar model may be introduced with regards Fire and Rescue Service governance.

The update was noted.

17. Purple Flag update

A Purple Flag update was provided as follows:

- Purple Flag accreditation was awarded on 28 January 2026.
- Assessors reported that the application was strong and commended the submission on the diversity of its evening and night-time economy. The partnership was recognised for its strong leadership and its focus on care and safety.
- For the second-year submission, recommendations included increasing engagement with visitors to gather more feedback on their evening and night-time experiences, ensuring future surveys reach a wider audience, and demonstrating the emergency evacuation and triage procedures already in place for vulnerable individuals.
- Assessors highlighted the importance of better reflecting the city's large student population and acknowledging that their needs are well met, while also developing more amenities for older age groups and other demographic groups who use the evening and night-time economy.
- The immediate priority since accreditation was to meet with the Purple Flag Working Group and a Traders Forum to draft an action plan for the coming year. Work is ongoing towards a submission deadline at the beginning of October. This year is a fallow year, meaning the assessment will be carried out remotely, with a full in-person assessment scheduled for the following year.
- The Action Plan was being shaped around the recommendations, and these had been grouped under five headings: wellbeing, movement, broad appeal, place, and policy envelope. The draft action plan was attached to the agenda.
- Feedback from both the Purple Flag Working Group and the Traders Forum will be incorporated into the final plan.
- Members were invited to share any further comments or suggestions.

Engagement with Best Bar None (BBN) was progressing, with 16 volunteers coming forward to train as BBN assessors in the city. Training is currently underway, after which venues will be invited to apply for accreditation.

An annual update will be provided on Purple Flag.

The update was noted.

18. Any Other Business

Community Safety Charter

The Community Safety Charter was launched on 23 March 2026 highlighting the collaborative work of the Community Safety Partnership.

Appreciation was expressed to all who took the time to attend, with a shared aim of maintaining ongoing commitment to the city.

19. Date of next Meeting

The date of the next meeting was noted.

Tuesday 30 June 2026 at 10.00 am