COMMUNITY SAFETY SELECT COMMITTEE
Work Programme 2026-2027

Date (4.30pm unless stated)	**Topic**	**Attendance**
30 April 2026	Overview Report: Adults, Health & Wellbeing (Community Safety & Regulated Services: Environmental Health & Licensing) Review of Community Participation Budget and Ward Transport Budget • SBC Community Services, Environment and Culture	Cllr Norma Stephenson OBE / Marc Stephenson / Stephen Donaghy / Leanne Maloney-Kelly / James O'Donnell Phil Hardie / Simon Milner
28 May	Monitoring: Action Plan – Children affected by Domestic Abuse Monitoring: Progress Update – Welcoming and Safe Town Centres Review of Community Participation Budget and Ward Transport Budget • SBC Community Services, Environment and Culture • Ward Councillor Survey Feedback • Other Local Authority Schemes Minutes of the Safer Stockton Partnership (January & March 2026)	Louise Hollick / Mandy MacKinnon Sharon Cooney / Richard Bradford Simon Milner / Andrew Corcoran
2 July	Review of Community Participation Budget and Ward Transport Budget • SBC Digital Services and Systems • Town / Parish Council Survey Feedback • Local Resident Survey Feedback	Natalie Sargeant
30 July	Review of Alley Gates • (Draft) Scope and Project Plan	Richard Bradford
30 July (informal)	Review of Community Participation Budget and Ward Transport Budget • Summary of Evidence / Draft Recommendations	Simon Milner
1 October	Overview and Performance Report: Neighbourhoods (Regulated Services: Trading Standards, Community Safety & Emergency Planning)	Kellie Hopkins / Marc Stephenson / Leanne Maloney-Kelly / Richard Bradford / Patrick Walker

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Date (4.30pm unless stated)	**Topic**	**Attendance**
	Review of Community Participation Budget and Ward Transport Budget • (Draft) Final Report Review of Alley Gates • SBC Community Safety • SBC Care For Your Area	 Cllr Richard Eglington / Kellie Hopkins / Phil Hardie / Simon Milner Richard Bradford John Angus
22 October	Air Quality: Annual Update Monitoring: Progress Update – Fly-Grazed Horses Review of Alley Gates • Cleveland Police	Stephen Donaghy Stephen Donaghy / Jamie Bell Jamie Bell
26 November	Monitoring: Action Plan – Community Participation Budget and Ward Transport Budget Review of Alley Gates • SBC Housing Services • Thirteen Housing Group Minutes of the Safer Stockton Partnership (May & September 2026)	Phil Hardie / Simon Milner Joy Swithenbank / Joanne Parker Angela Corner
7 January 2027 (informal)	Review of Alley Gates • Summary of Evidence / Draft Recommendations	Richard Bradford
28 January	Review of Alley Gates • (Draft) Final Report	Cllr Norma Stephenson OBE / Kellie Hopkins / Marc Stephenson / Richard Bradford
25 February		
25 March	Overview and Performance Report: Neighbourhoods (TBC)	Cllr Norma Stephenson OBE / Kellie Hopkins / Marc Stephenson

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2026-2027 Scrutiny Reviews

- Community Participation Budget and Ward Transport Budget
- Alley Gates

Monitoring Items (scheduled / to be scheduled)

- Welcoming and Safe Town Centres (Progress Update) – TBC (early-2027)
- Children affected by Domestic Abuse (Progress Update) – TBC (early-2027)
- Community Participation Budget and Ward Transport Budget (Action Plan) – November 2026

OTHER INFORMATION SOURCES / UPDATES

- **Safer Stockton Partnership (SSP)**: The SSP is the local community safety partnership and works together to reduce crime and anti-social behaviour (ASB) – meeting dates, agendas and minutes can be accessed via https://moderngov.stockton.gov.uk/ieListMeetings.aspx?CId=1144&Year=0. Every three years, the SSP undertake a Crime and Disorder Audit and, following public consultation, produce a Community Safety Plan which sets out how agencies within the Partnership intend to achieve targets in crime reduction – the latest version is the Stockton-on-Tees Community Safety Strategy 2022-2025.

  Part two of the Police and Crime Commissioner Review, recommended that the Home Office undertake a full review of Community Safety Partnerships (CSPs) across England and Wales. The CSP review ran from March 2023 to January 2024 and has now concluded – it sought to clarify the role of CSPs, and improve their transparency, accountability, and effectiveness, making it easier for them to serve the needs of their communities in tackling crime, disorder, and antisocial behaviour. As a result of the review, the Home Office will be developing new guidance for CSPs, which will reflect the context CSPs currently work within and set out recommended minimum standards, as well as suggestions for good practice.

- **Serious Violence Duty**: The Duty (Aug 22) https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/police-crime-sentencing-and-courts-bill-2021-factsheets/police-crime-sentencing-and-courts-bill-2021-serious-violence-duty-factsheet and associated guidance (Dec 22): https://www.gov.uk/government/news/efforts-to-tackle-serious-violence-and-homicide-stepped-up?utm_medium=email&utm_campaign=govuk-notifications-topic&utm_source=66d44b4c-9d22-4f1d-aed7-517818847183&utm_content=immediately. The Home Office plan to update the guidance to the Serious Violence Duty (SVD) – the LGA will be giving views (Councils have contributed to this).

- **Martyn's Law**: The Home Office has released new guidance materials to support public understanding of the Terrorism (Protection of Premises) Act 2025—commonly known as Martyn's Law—by publishing a myth buster and a one-page leaflet aimed at clarifying the Act's scope and dispelling common misconceptions.

  The Institute of Licensing has published Martyn's Law guidance which has been produced to support licensing professionals, operators, regulators and partners as the UK prepares for the implementation of the Terrorism (Protection of Premises) Act 2025.

  In April 2026, the Home Office published the Section 27 statutory guidance for the Terrorism (Protection of Premises) Act 2025, commonly referred to as Martyn's Law. The guidance explains the core concepts of

the legislation and helps those responsible for premises and events determine whether they fall within its and how to meet their legal duties. Separately, the SIA will shortly publish its draft Section 12 Guidance, which explains how it will exercise its functions as the regulator. This document and a public consultation regarding the SIA's regulatory approach will be published in the near future. All relevant information can be found here, which hosts a range of Martyn's Law materials, including links to the Section 27 Guidance.

In related matters, His Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire & Rescue Services (HMICFRS) published a report in September 2026 on public safety at events, containing 37 recommendations, including making Safety Advisory Groups (SAGs) statutory. The report will be of interest to Councils and partners involved in event safety.

- **Modern Slavery**: New modern slavery risk assessment and due diligence guidance for local authority commissioners of adult social care, produced by the University of Nottingham Rights Lab in tandem with the LGA, was published in October 2023 - it provides advice on to how to set up effective local systems to identify and manage the risks of modern slavery in adult social care. The LGA has established a modern slavery network for Council officers leading on work to tackle modern slavery – the network meets quarterly via Teams and aims to share good practice and discuss current issues. In March 2025, the Home Office published its end of year summary for the National Referral Mechanism (NRM) and Duty to Notify Statistics in 2024. The statistics provide a breakdown of the number of potential victims of modern slavery referred into the NRM. 19,125 potential victims of modern slavery were referred to the Home Office last year, representing a 13 per cent increase compared to the preceding year. The Home Office has published their Action Plan on modern slavery, which sets out the Home Office and partners' actions to tackle modern slavery over the next 12 months, and long-term ambition over the coming years. It sets the strategic approach for the next financial year, reflecting current parameters and constraints (including resourcing and budget). Middlesex University and Anti-Slavery International have completed research exploring the role of local authorities as first responders. The report looks at the challenges and opportunities facing Councils, and focuses on the need to improve training, awareness, and collaboration to strengthen the local response to modern slavery.

  The LGA has updated its councillor guide on tackling modern slavery. The guide provides advice to Councillors on how they can increase awareness and understanding of modern slavery across their Council and community, as well as how Councillors can scrutinise the work of the Council and its partners on modern slavery, ensuring accountability.

  In November 2025, the Human Trafficking published updated Slavery and Trafficking Survivor Care Standards (Care Standards) which aim to improve service provision by ensuring that adult survivors of human trafficking and modern slavery consistently receive high quality care wherever they are in the UK.

  In February 2026, the Home Office published its end of year summary for the National Referral Mechanism (NRM) and Duty to Notify Statistics in 2025. Government has also published a summary of responses to the call for evidence on the identification of victims of modern slavery, alongside the publication of a written Ministerial statement. Respondents to the consultation highlighted the importance of trauma-informed approaches, training gaps among practitioners, children requiring different approaches, and the value of multi-agency collaboration.

  Anti-Slavery International has also published A Training Framework for Local Authorities as Modern Slavery First Responders in England and Wales which Council officers may find helpful.

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- **Youth Offending**: *Turnaround* is a voluntary youth early intervention programme led by the Ministry of Justice. The programme provides multi-year grant funding to Youth Offending Teams (YOTs) across England and Wales until March 2025, enabling them to intervene earlier and improve outcomes for children on the cusp of entering the youth justice system. The eligibility criteria for *Turnaround* includes; children involved in anti-social behaviour (ASB) – ranging from coming to notice for repeated involvement in ASB up to and including receiving a Civil Order for ASB. The Ministry of Justice is encouraging all community safety teams to engage with their local YOT Manager or Management Board to discuss a referral pathway for eligible children so they can be offered support via *Turnaround*.

- **Anti-Social Behaviour (ASB)**: The Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman issued a press release in August 2023 expressing concern that Councils were not doing enough to help victims of ASB. The Ombudsman has also produced a learning lessons from complaints about antisocial behaviour document which includes scrutiny questions for Councillors. The ASB Action Plan has since been updated (March 2024).

  The Victims and Courts Bill includes new powers for the Victims' Commissioner to scrutinise the treatment of victims of anti-social behaviour. The Commissioner has already taken a close interest in ASB but to date, her focus has been on the criminal justice system. This additional power will enable future Commissioners to look more widely at the victim experience. In preparation for this, the Office of the Victims' Commissioner is undertaking a mapping exercise, to look at the victim journey across all agencies, identifying sources of data, gaps in policy and obstacles to victims reporting and getting support. The Commissioner is keen to receive any case studies and feedback about current processes.

  The Home Office has updated the ASB statutory guidance for frontline professionals to housing providers and LAs which has been updated on gov.uk. These changes have been made following the recommendations of the Victims' Commissioner's 2024 report, "Still living a nightmare: Understanding the experiences of victims of anti-social behaviour". Key updates include:

  - Enhanced recommendations for victim participation and support throughout the ASB Case Review process.
  - Clearer guidance on the role of a single point of contact for victims
  - Stronger emphasis on the use of independent chairs for case reviews.
  - Alignment with the Victims Code to ensure victims of criminal ASB are referred to support services, regardless of whether criminal charges are pursued.
  - Additional guidance on the interface between ASB and safeguarding, including domestic abuse and exploitation.

  More recently, updated ASB statutory guidance has been published following stakeholder feedback. Many suggestions have been incorporated into the final document. Two versions are available. Frontline practitioners should continue to use the July 2025 guidance until 26 October 2026. The October 2026 guidance October 2026 guidance, which reflects changes introduced by the Crime and Policing Act 2026, takes effect on 26 October 2026 and replaces the earlier version.

- **Counter-Terrorism**: In July 2023, the Government published its updated counter-terrorism strategy, CONTEST, which judges that risks from terrorism are rising. In related matters, SBC rolled-out mandatory staff training around the Prevent and Protect duty at the end of April 2023. In March 2024, the Government published a new definition of extremism, updating the one in the 2011 Prevent Strategy and to reflect the evolution of extremist ideologies and the social harms they create. The Government also

recently published a progress report one year on from the publication of the Independent Review of Prevent. This sets out that 30 of the 34 recommendations are now complete, including updated statutory guidance, training and the assessment framework, the launch of a new Standards and Compliance Unit (STaCU) to handle complaints and provide oversight.

On 30 September, Counter Terrorism Policing launched ACT for Local Authorities. Led by National Counter Terrorism Security Office (NaCTSO), ACT for Local Authorities uses CTP's regional network of Counter Terrorism Security Advisers and Prepare Officers to enhance the capabilities of local authorities in delivering the Protect and Prepare elements of the national counter terrorism strategy. ACT for Local Authorities strengthens local authority capabilities in protective security across five key areas: planning and development, licensing, community safety, transport and highways, and emergency planning. ACT complements the Terrorism (Protection of Premises) Act 2025, offering tailored information, guidance, and access to specialists. Local authorities will be able to access resources – including toolkits and videos for each of the five priority areas – primarily through the ProtectUK website to support their consideration and understanding of terrorist risks, protective security and preparedness.

In June 2026, Counter Terrorism Policing launched a new product designed to support organisations in security and preparedness from acts of terrorism as well as wider criminal threats. This Roadmap provides a practical introduction for those starting out, while also offering further guidance and resources to organisations building on existing work to enhance safety, protect people, and strengthen preparedness.

A significantly revised version of the National Counter Terrorism Security Office's (NACTSO) online ACT security awareness e-learning course has also recently been published, primarily targeted at staff working within venues and public spaces but is also relevant to critical national infrastructure sites and members of the public.

- **Fire & Rescue**: State of Fire & Rescue 2022 - His Majesty's Chief Inspector of Fire and Rescue Services Annual Assessment of Fire and Rescue Services in England. Arson and deliberate fire setting remain a significant issue for Cleveland Fire Brigade with Cleveland being the arson capital of the UK – in October 2022, Cleveland Fire Brigade appealed for everyone to become a FireStopper in a new bid to reduce arson and violent attacks on Firefighters.

- **Shoplifting**: Police to treat shoplifting like organised crime (BBC online article published in October 2023): https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/business-67191793. In November 2024, it was reported that incidents of shoplifting had reached a 20-year high, according to figures recorded by the police. A survey of shopkeepers by the Association of Convenience Stores found that 94 per cent felt that the problem had worsened in the last 12 months: Sky: 'We need help': Workers say shoplifting is 'out of control' after surge in brazen thefts.

- **Dangerous Dogs Act 1991**: The Government has added the XL Bully breed type to the list of dogs banned under the Dangerous Dogs Act 1991 in England and Wales. From 31 December 2023, breeding, selling, exchanging, advertising, rehoming, gifting, abandoning, and allowing an XL Bully dog to stray will be illegal, and these dogs must be muzzled and on a lead in public. From 1 February 2024 it will be a criminal offence to own an XL Bully in England and Wales unless the owner has a Certificate of Exemption. Defra has published further information about how to prepare for the ban which will be updated regularly, and they will continue engagement with stakeholders. In March 2024, the LGA wrote to Council chief finance officers on behalf of DEFRA about new burdens funding relating to the XL Bully Ban for 2023-24.

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- **Licensing**: Legislation has been introduced into Parliament to amend the Licensing Act 2003 so that it is easier to get changes to licensing hours for special events or occasions, such as significant sporting events, through Parliament. The Bill is more concerned with parliamentary process than the contents of the Licensing Act itself. The Local Government Association (LGA) understands this legislation has Government support, so is likely to complete its parliamentary stages and become law.

  In July 2025, the Transport Select Committee launched a new parliamentary inquiry looking at taxi and private hire vehicle licensing. This inquiry examined whether the current licensing framework provides authorities with the tools they need to successfully regulate the sector. The Committee published its 'Raising the standard' report in June 2026 – this included a submission from Stockton-on-Tees Borough Council. In January 2026, the Government launched a consultation on the future of taxi and private hire vehicle licensing. The proposals represent a significant change from the current system, and Councils are encouraged to respond. The consultation is open until midday on 1 April 2026.

  Leeds City Council and West Yorkshire Trading Standards are working together to push for a national change to the Licensing Act by gathering national support and evidence via a short survey: Licensing Act loophole survey. The goal is to close the loopholes which undermine the work from Local Authorities and regulatory services to protect communities and public health. One major issue is the transfer of alcohol licences during a review or appeal. Organised crime groups are exploiting this bypassing licences to individuals with no known links to the criminal activity.

  October 2025 saw calls for better monitoring of gambling venues, following investigation by the BBC which found that more than a third of Councils have not been able to carry out an inspection in the past year. The LGA said Councils struggled to fund proactive inspections, and welcomed plans to give it new powers to block new gambling premises opening on high streets. The Government also launched a call for evidence on what will be significant alcohol licensing reform, building on the recommendations of the Licensing Taskforce recommendations and the government's response (the LGA will be responding, but Councils are encouraged to submit their own response by 6 November), and launched a call for evidence to inform their plans to introduce a licensing scheme for the retail sale of tobacco (Councils are encouraged to respond by 3 December and the LGA will also be submitting a response).

  The Government has since published its national licensing policy framework, which only applies to on-sales premises. Whilst this is not statutory guidance, Government is clear that licensing authorities should demonstrate how they have had regard to the guidance when next reviewing their licensing policy. It has also produced an analysis of the responses received to the call for evidence on alcohol licensing reform.

  The statutory guidance governing England's new primate licensing regime received a targeted update on 2 March, refining several operational points ahead of the law coming into force on 6 April 2026.

  The Tobacco and Vapes Act now has Royal Assent. The law introduces stronger enforcement powers, including the ability to implement a retail licensing scheme and tackle illicit tobacco and vape sales. The English Devolution Act also has received Royal Assent – this will introduce more robust national standards in taxi and PHV licensing, as well as national enforcement powers, and will introduce cumulative impact assessments in gambling licensing.

  The Government has also announced a draft Taxi and Private Hire Vehicle (PHV) Bill in the King's Speech, setting out the most significant overhaul of taxi and PHV legislation in more than a century. The LGA will work with Government to develop the Bill.

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- **Domestic Homicide Reviews (DHRs)**: The LGA and DAC conducted a survey regarding DHRs - the results can be found on the LGA website. The LGA, Association of Police and Crime Commissioners (APCC) and Domestic Abuse Commissioner (DAC) formed a Domestic and Related Deaths Review (DARDR) forum for those who are involved in commissioning DARDRs or DHRs. There are currently 195 members of the forum from Councils, police, Offices of Police and Crime Commissioners and health. The forum set up a task group to give recommendations to government to consider in the forthcoming output from a review of DARDRs. The second phase will begin shortly where access to qualified chairs and costs will be considered.

  In March 2026, Surviving Economic Abuse published a landmark new report, "Hidden risks, fatal consequences: Economic abuse in Domestic Homicide Reviews", which examines the role of economic abuse in domestic abuse–related deaths across England and Wales. The report finds that economic abuse is a significant and often overlooked factor in domestic homicides. Analysis of 454 Domestic Homicide Reviews (DHRs) showed that 231 cases (51%) involved economic abuse by a current or former partner, equating to at least one victim dying every 19 days. The majority of cases involved a female victim and male perpetrator, and victims experiencing economic abuse were typically younger than those in non-economic abuse cases. However, fewer than half of DHR panels recognised the presence of economic abuse, and only a small number of in-depth reviews made recommendations to address it. The findings also highlight repeated missed opportunities by agencies to identify and respond to risks linked to economic abuse.

  The revised Domestic Homicide Review (DHR), soon to become the Domestic Abuse Related Death Review (DARDR) guidance, is expected to be published in early autumn 2026. Key changes include:

  - Updated review criteria aligned with the statutory definition of domestic abuse
  - A new Scoping Review process
  - Strengthened guidance on engagement with families and communities
  - Enhanced oversight through the DHR Quality Assurance Board
  - New templates to improve consistency and efficiency.

  Death notifications received after publication must follow the new guidance. Chairs must complete mandatory training in order to be eligible to chair a review and CSPs should use the Register of Accredited Chairs to appoint DARDR Chairs. The new guidance will contain more detailed guidance that CSPs should consider when they are seeking to appoint a DARDR Chair (e.g. experience of report writing, understanding of confidentiality, understanding of trauma-informed practice), but evidence of a previous DHR/DARDR is not explicitly required. The Home Office will host a series of informative webinars in October/November following publication.

- **Fires involving e-bikes and e-scooters**: The Office for Product Safety & Standards (OPSS) has written to heads of trading standards, asking that, where resources and prioritisation allow, Trading Standards services identify and inspect bike repair businesses and where possible inform OPSS of their findings.

- **Social Cohesion**: Dame Sara Khan has published her independent review into social cohesion and resilience. Recommendations include the establishment of a new Office for Social Cohesion and Democratic Resilience (OSCDR), a 5-year Social Cohesion and Democratic Resilience Strategy (SCDR) and Action Plan, and that Government should better engage with Local Authorities over actions that could undermine social cohesion – for example in relation to asylum dispersal.

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The LGA and the Belong Network have published guidance to support councils to build cohesive communities. This January 2026 guidance includes a clear summary of legal obligations, examples of effective tools and strategies for embedding cohesion in council services and outlines the practical steps required to develop effective cohesion strategies. It also shares good practice examples from councils throughout the guide.

In March 2026, Government published a new Cohesion Strategy which sets out its priorities in this area. Crucially, the guidance recognises the important role councils play in building cohesive communities.

In June 2026, British Future and the British Muslim Trust have published a report: Understanding Anti-Muslim Hostility: Foundations for Action examining majority public attitudes and prejudices towards Muslims in Britain, as well as Muslim attitudes and experiences of prejudice and hostility. You can download a copy of the report here or read a news summary here.

- **Safe Access Zones Around Abortion Clinics**: Councils have been contacting the LGA regarding Safe Access Zones around abortion clinics. The LGA have been engaging with government to ensure safe access zones can be established. Legislation will come into force from 31 October 2024 and will make it illegal for anyone to do anything that intentionally or recklessly influences someone's decision to use abortion services, obstructs them, or causes harassment or distress to someone using or working at these premises. The law will apply within a 150-metre radius of the abortion service provider. The College of Policing and the Crown Prosecution Service will be publishing operational guidance to ensure there is clarity and consistency with the enforcement of the new offence. Further information is available at: Protection zones around abortion clinics in place by October - GOV.UK (www.gov.uk).

- **Trading Standards**: Illegal imported sweets which contain banned additives linked to cancer and behavioural problems are "flooding UK high streets", councils have said (see February 2025 article: https://www.theguardian.com/uk-news/2025/feb/13/imported-sweets-american-candy-flooding-uk-high-streets-councils-banned-additives?utm_medium=email&utm_source=govdelivery). The warning first came from the Chartered Trading Standards Institute, which said that demand for American confectionery was being driven by influencers on social media platforms, leading to high street shops and smaller convenience stores stocking the products.

- **Crime and Policing Bill**: Early-2025 saw the UK Government introduce the Crime and Policing Bill to Parliament. Key provisions include:
  - Powers for Theft Recovery: Police can now enter properties without a warrant to recover stolen items located via electronic tracking, such as 'find my phone' apps. This change enables swifter action during critical investigation periods.
  - Protection for Retail Workers: The bill introduces a specific offence for assaulting retail workers, ensuring better safeguards for employees in shops and supermarkets.
  - Addressing Antisocial Behaviour: New "Respect Orders" will ban habitual offenders from town centres, and police are empowered to seize vehicles like off-road bikes and e-scooters used irresponsibly in public spaces.
  - Combatting Knife Crime: Measures include increased penalties for selling dangerous weapons to minors and the creation of a new offence for possessing a blade with intent to cause harm.
  - Violence Against Women and Girls: The bill strengthens Stalking Protection Orders, criminalises spiking incidents, and restricts registered sex offenders from changing their names to evade detection (note: publication of a new VAWG government strategy is expected later in 2025).

- Child Protection: A new duty mandates adults in specific roles to report instances of child sexual abuse, implementing recommendations from the Independent Inquiry into Child Sexual Abuse.
- Public Order Enhancements: The legislation bans face coverings used to conceal identity during protests and criminalises climbing on designated war memorials, promoting respect for public monuments.

- **Young Futures Programme**: The Young Futures Programme is a national, cross-government plan to prevent youth violence by proactively identifying and supporting young people most at risk. Central to the strategy are Young Futures Hubs, local centres that bring together mental health services, education, career advice, youth workers and police. Prevention Partnerships, which are multi-agency panels, will be introduced where there are Violence Reduction Units. This will work with communities, charities, schools, health services and police to map risk, co-ordinate early interventions and tailor support packages. These panels harness VRU expertise and local knowledge to spot vulnerabilities early, reduce youth involvement in crime (including knife crime and violence against women and girls), and offer continuous, evidence-based support. Each area with a VRU area will introduce a Prevention Panel from October 2025. Roll out to further areas is expected from April 2026.

- **Violence Against Women and Girls (VAWG)**: The Violence Against Women and Girls (VAWG) Strategy publication is scheduled for September 2025.

- **Domestic Abuse**: A Sanctuary Scheme is a victim survivor centred initiative which aims to enable households at risk of domestic abuse to remain in their own homes (if it is safe and their choice) and reduce repeat victimisation through the provision of enhanced security measures (sanctuary) and support. The Local Government Association (LGA), the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG), and Standing Together Against Domestic Abuse (STADA) are working in partnership to clarify current practice. In September 2025, surveys were sent to all Council Directors of Housing to delegate to relevant colleagues to complete.

  A national reciprocal housing scheme is being developed, led by Standing Together Against Domestic Abuse and Clarion Housing, to provide secure housing options for domestic abuse survivors who need to relocate while retaining their tenancy rights. Building on the Whole Housing Approach toolkit, several local schemes already exist, and the national initiative aims to expand this support across England. With 2.4 million people experiencing domestic abuse in 2022, housing remains a key barrier to safety, making reciprocal moves a vital lifeline that prevent re-victimisation, reduce homelessness pressures, uphold tenancy security under the Domestic Abuse Act, widen rehousing options, and offer consistent support for both survivors and landlords. Standing Together Against Domestic Abuse would appreciate if councils completed this survey.

  In December 2025, the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG) confirmed £499m over the next three years to support domestic abuse duties, providing LAs with the financial certainty they have called for – this is a £19m uplift to the £480m announced as part of the provisional allocations published on 18 December in the provisional Local Government Finance Settlement. From April 2026, domestic abuse funding will be included within the new ringfenced Homelessness, Rough Sleeping and Domestic Abuse Grant, enabling local authorities to take a more integrated approach to supporting vulnerable people across these three areas.

  On 9 July, MHCLG published two new research reports contributing to the evidence base on housing and domestic abuse:

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- Research on Sanctuary Schemes, examining how Sanctuary Schemes are delivered across England and the role they can play in helping victim-survivors remain safely in their homes where this is their preferred option. Domestic abuse sanctuary schemes: process evaluation findings - GOV.UK
- Research on a Shared Outcomes Framework, exploring how outcomes for victim-survivors accessing domestic abuse safe accommodation and housing support services can be measured and understood more consistently. Domestic abuse safe accommodation: victim-survivor outcomes - GOV.UK

Together, the reports provide insights into effective practice, service delivery and outcomes, supporting local authorities, housing providers, commissioners and specialist services. The research was informed by practitioners and victim-survivors, whose contributions are gratefully acknowledged.

The LGAs Safe Accommodation Survey (June-July 2026) highlights Councils' work to support victims and survivors of domestic abuse, alongside financial pressures and shortages of suitable accommodation. Of the 49 responding English Councils, 73% reported that financial pressures affected their ability to provide safe accommodation to a great or moderate extent. 78% identified a shortage of accommodation suitable for victims with specific needs, while 69% reported shortages in overall supply. Although 86% said provision met identified needs to a great or moderate extent overall, the findings highlight gaps for particular groups. Partnerships with specialist organisations were the most common approach to addressing different needs.

In anticipation of the Domestic Abuse Protective Order (DAPO) rollout, questions have been raised by Council housing, social care and legal teams about Local Authority involvement in DAPOs. Information is sought from pilot areas on locally produced guidance and case studies demonstrating good practice. Clarification is also requested on whether an evaluation of the pilots is expected before the national rollout referred to as taking place in November.

- **Civil Resilience**: In November 2025, the LGA updated guidance designed to support Councillors in strengthening their approach to civil resilience. It provides an overview of the Council's responsibilities in this area, along with targeted sections outlining the role of Ward Councillors and portfolio holders. A new section also outlines how officers can support Elected Members in fulfilling their civil resilience roles.

- **Deepfakes and Synthetic Media**: The LGA's Deepfakes and Synthetic Media Unpacked is a short, accessible video series introducing what deepfakes and synthetic media are, why they matter for local government and what practical steps officers and councillors can take to reduce potential risks.

- **Police and Crime Commissioner (PCC) for Cleveland**: Further information on the office of the PCC can be found on via https://www.cleveland.pcc.police.uk/commissioner/office/ - this includes engagement with the **Cleveland Police and Crime Panel (PCP)**. Access to PCP agendas and papers can be found via https://www.cleveland.pcc.police.uk/commissioner/office/the-work-of-cleveland-police-and-crime-panel/.

  On 13 November 2025, Government announced the abolition of PCC elections when current terms end in 2028. It is intended that where there are directly-elected Mayors, the Deputy Mayor for policing model will continue. This will also be the case for where new Strategic Mayoral Authorities (SMAs) will be established. Where there are not Mayors, it is expected a new local Policing and Crime Board is established to local government leaders together to oversee the police force. These Boards are said by government to not be a return to the bureaucratic and invisible committee-based oversight of policing that existed before the establishment of PCCs. Government proposes these Boards include the leaders of each upper tier

authority from the force area and up to two co-optees. The LGA is working with the Home Office with regards to how these police boards might operate.