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(Please note that "Information Only" reports do not require Integrated Impact Assessments, Legal or Finance Comments as no decision is being taken)

<b>Title of meeting:</b>	Cabinet
<b>Subject:</b>	Violence Against Women and Girls - Findings from the Community Safety Survey 2022
<b>Date of meeting:</b>	27 <sup>th</sup> September 2022
<b>Report by:</b>	Caroline Hopper, Corporate Projects Manager, Strategy, The Executive
<b>Wards affected:</b>	All

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**1. Requested by Cllr Fazackarley****2. Purpose -**

To update cabinet following a report in March this year that recommended adding questions to the Community Safety Survey 2022 allowing residents to share their views about how public lighting and CCTV could be improved to promote safer streets and a safer public domain for women and girls.

**3. Information Requested**

- 3.1 In December 2021 there was a request for a Safety Audit to allow Portsmouth residents to share their views about how public lighting and CCTV could be improved to promote safer streets and a safer public domain for women and girls.
- 3.2 Every two years since 2010, the Safer Portsmouth Partnership carries out face-to-face surveys with approximately 1,000 residents to seek their views and their experience of crime and anti-social behaviour in the city.<sup>1</sup> The survey collects demographic information, so that responses from females only can be extracted, or can be compared with answers from males.
- 3.3 The field work for the survey took place in February (2022) and included additional questions relating to the safety of women and girls - see para 3.4. Adding these

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<sup>1</sup> The Community Safety Research team (now sitting within the Public Health Intelligence Team) co-ordinate this piece of research, employing and supervising students, enabling them to conduct the fieldwork

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questions to the biennial<sup>2</sup> survey provides a consistent opportunity for the public to feedback their views in relation to the safety of women and girls going forward.

3.4 Question 9a of the Community Safety Survey was amended to include 9b:

- 9a - Are there any parts or places in Portsmouth where you feel unsafe or where you avoid going due to feeling fearful of crime?
- 9b - Please tell us where you feel unsafe or avoid, giving as much detail as possible about the location. Thinking about each location can you tell us why you feel unsafe or avoid these locations.

## 4. Findings

4.1 The places that women most avoided or felt unsafe were similar to those mentioned by males, although generally a slightly higher proportion of women felt unsafe in these areas than men: Somerstown (19%), City Centre (13%) and Buckland (12%) were the most commonly mentioned areas. However, women are twice as likely to feel unsafe in the City Centre/Commercial Road area than males, when it was dark or at night (73%, n60) than at any time (27%, n22).

Table 1: Areas that participants feel unsafe or avoid due to fear of crime, comparison by gender

Area	Females		Males	
	Number	%	Number	%
Somerstown	123	18.6%	72	12.4%
City Centre / Commercial Road	85	12.9%	35	6.0%
Buckland	81	12.3%	67	11.5%
Fratton	45	6.8%	27	4.6%
Southsea	43	6.5%	28	4.8%
Guildhall	31	4.7%	15	2.6%
Northend	15	2.3%	19	3.3%
Paulsgrove	15	2.3%	14	2.4%

4.2 Overall, most female participants felt unsafe because they had heard that these areas had a bad reputation, although some participants provided more concrete reasons such as drug issues, a high crime rate, groups or gangs hanging around or poor lighting. This, together with the fact that residents have reported feeling unsafe in these areas since the survey began 20 years ago, means that there is scope for

<sup>2</sup> Every two years

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doing further work to improve the reputation of these areas, alongside work to tackle drug misuse and crime.

- 4.3 Overwhelmingly female participants felt that a greater police presence in these areas would help them feel safer, but other solutions were mentioned, including better lighting and CCTV, also more provision/activities for young people, tackling drug misuse and providing education/awareness.

*"Do up the High Street, provide youth centres and homeless shelters, take care of commercial properties"*

*"A presence, day and night, maybe volunteers, and CCTV monitored"*

*"Better lighting, more security and police on the streets"*

- 4.4 The survey did not ask about feelings of safety or experience of sexual crime within and around the Night-Time Economy (NTE). Violence against women and girls (VAWG) within the NTE is a growing area of focus for Police both nationally and locally.
- 4.5 A further report from the Director of Public Health on the overall findings from the Community Safety Survey 2022 will be brought forward at a later date.

## **5. Wider context**

- 5.1 The Police and Crime Commissioner for Hampshire has committed to recruiting an extra 600 officers across Hampshire to improve police visibility and reduce crime, although it will take time before all the new officers complete their training and are deployed.
- 5.2 The council has upgraded all streetlighting within the highways network to LED controlled by a central management system. Stakeholders including, Police, Community Safety, University of Portsmouth, and organisations working in and around the Night-time Economy (NTE) supported the review of the adaptive lighting profile. Work to upgrade lighting in and around Local Authority Housing stock to the same standards is underway and will benefit some areas within the City Centre, Buckland and Somerstown. The importance of lighting is also being considered within the re-development of the former Horatia and Leamington sites. Some

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recreational spaces have also benefited from lighting upgrades funded by the Home Office via Safe Streets.

- 5.3 PCC has 132 public space surveillance cameras (PSS) across the city. The CCTV control room is manned 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. In addition to the PSS cameras there are 2,000 cameras across housing blocks and other PCC buildings. There is a suite of rapid re-deployable cameras that can be deployed to crime and anti-social behaviour hotspots across the city, and several have been installed as a result of the Safer Streets funding.
- 5.4 In the wake of high-profile deaths of women in the last year (Sarah Everard in March 2021, and Sabina Nessa in September 2021), there has been an increased focus nationally on the prevalence of harassment, bullying and intimidating behaviour in public spaces, particularly towards women and girls. An Environmental Visual Audit (EVA) of the Guildhall Area was undertaken by the Police in 2021 and made 23 recommendations for situational and behavioural measures. This was aimed primarily at reducing opportunity for sexual crime to occur alongside ensuring that where incidents do occur, staff within the NTE respond appropriately. Some of these recommendations have been and/or are being addressed through Safer Streets funding, others will require more significant investment such as Levelling Up funding<sup>3</sup>.
- 5.5 The Council is in the process of creating a masterplan plan for the whole city for the next fifteen years. This plan recognises the challenges Portsmouth faces and puts forward a new plan for ensuring the city centre is viable and vibrant. This plan provides an opportunity to design out crime. A key element to this plan is encouraging new development. To support this aspiration the Council is in discussion with Homes England about potential Brownfield Infrastructure Funding investment in City Centre North and Sommerstown area. A bid totalling 19.8M to transform the Guildhall Area of the city centre has also been submitted to the Levelling Up Fund. This bid was supported by the Police and the University of Portsmouth, and included £9.5m for wayfinding, bespoke lighting, and a permanent pedestrianised zone. The outcome of this bid is expected in October.

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<sup>3</sup> Community Safety and Environment Portfolio noting paper: Situational Crime Prevention to support the safety of Women and Girls in Guildhall, November 2021.

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### **6. Safer Streets - Home Office funding rounds 2,3, and 4**

- 6.1 Safer streets is a national initiative to reduce crime, making residents safer and reducing demand on the police, funded by the Home Office.
- 6.2 Since June 2021, Portsmouth has benefited considerably from Safer Streets funding, having been successful in funding rounds two, three, Safety of Women at Night (SWaN) and most recently awarded further funding through round four. The combined total awarded exceeds £1.6m.
- 6.3 There has been a review of, and improvements to, lighting and CCTV in the city as part of the Safer Streets Initiative, with further improvements planned within the Guildhall Walk and Hotwalls area during 2022.
- 6.4 Challenging underlying social norms that create the context for criminal activity and building local capacity to respond is key to improving feelings of safety. Safer Streets four funding will see the continuation of initiatives including active bystander training, peer mentorship work in schools, and on-going development of a network of safe spaces across the city. This work is being undertaken in partnership with the neighbouring authorities of Gosport, Fareham, Havant and Isle of Wight.

### **7. Conclusion:**

- 7.1 It is noted that the findings of the Community Safety Survey, alongside other work being undertaken such as Safer Streets, will be used as part of an evidence base for any further, targeted infrastructure work in the identified areas and for more positive communications to try and reduce reputational issues in areas identified. The survey did not ask about feelings of safety or experience of sexual crime within and around the NTE. It is noted this is an area for further exploration and consideration will be given about how best to understand the prevalence of this issue locally moving forward.

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Signed by Paddy May  
Corporate Strategy Manager

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**Appendices:** none.

**Background list of documents: Section 100D of the Local Government Act 1972**

The following documents disclose facts or matters, which have been relied upon to a material extent by the author in preparing this report:

<b>Title of document</b>	<b>Location</b>
Community Safety and Environment Portfolio noting paper: Situational Crime Prevention to support the safety of Women and Girls in Guildhall, November 2021.	Corporate Strategy
Portsmouth Community Safety Survey 2022	Public Health