

REPORT TO COUNCIL

Date of Meeting: 13 January 2026

Report of: Strategic Director Place

Title: Community Safety

Is this a Key Decision?

No

Is this an Executive or Council Function?

Council

1. What is the report about?

1.1 To establish several roles to lead on community safety across Exeter, including tackling Anti-Social Behaviour (ASB) in the City Centre and neighbourhoods.

2. Recommendations:

It is recommended that Council approves:

2.1 A budget of £335,390 to establish a permanent Community Safety Team (CST);

2.2 The provision of eight new roles in total within the Directorate for Place under the management of the Head of Service for City Centre & Net Zero.

3. Reasons for the recommendation:

3.1 In July 2024, the Council established a pilot CST to trial and test patrols within the City Centre, specifically the area covered by the Public Spaces Protection Order (PSPO). Four temporary posts were established, including two officers seconded from the Public Car Parking team and two agency workers. These posts were part funded by the Police and Crime Commissioner and In Exeter. In addressing crime and ASB, the CST has made a significant impact on the feeling of safety within the City Centre.

3.2 The CST will support the enforcement of the City Centre and St Thomas PSPO and will patrol public parks, open spaces and neighbourhood shopping precincts across the city that suffer from ASB. This is in response to suggestions made as part of the 2025 residents survey.

3.3 To support Safer Exeter, this report also recommends the introduction of a Community Safety Team Supervisor and a Community Safety Partnership Manager, to engage in a wider range of community safety activities.

4. What are the resource implications including non-financial resources:

4.1 External funding of £45,000 per annum has been committed by InExeter until 2029/30. It is understood that no further funding will be forthcoming from the Police and Crime Commissioner.

4.2 Within the City Centre & Net Zero budget (M303) there is a budget of £32,700, that previously covered the salary of the UK Shared Prosperity Funding Project Manager. This budget will be utilised to cover salaries of this new Team.

4.3 Considering existing budget and external funding, the cost to establish a new team of eight is £335,390 per annum, which covers salary, oncosts, training, accreditation, uniform and a small electric vehicle.

4.4 The table below highlights existing internal budget, external income and additional budget required from 2025/26.

INCOME					
	2026/27	2027/28	2028/29	2029/30	2030/31
Exeter City Council (M303)	£32,700	£32,700	£32,700	£32,700	£32,700
InExeter	£45,000	£45,000	£45,000	£45,000	£0
TOTAL	£77,700	£77,700	£77,700	£77,700	£32,700
EXPENDITURE					
1 x Community Safety Partnership Manager (Grade M)	£67,808	£67,808	£67,808	£67,808	£67,808
1 x Community Safety Team Supervisor (Grade I)	£53,183	£53,183	£53,183	£53,183	£53,183
6x Community Safety Team Officer (Grade G)	£258,816	£258,816	£258,816	£258,816	£258,816
Training, accreditation & Uniform for 7 roles (£4k each)	£28,000	£28,000	£28,000	£28,000	£28,000
Electric Car to undertake city patrols	£5,283	£5,283	£5,283	£5,283	£5,283
TOTAL	£413,090	£413,090	£413,090	£413,090	£413,090
BUDGET REQUIRED	£335,390	£335,390	£335,390	£335,390	£380,390

4.5 There are currently four officers employed within the CST, their temporary contracts end on 31 March 2026. If the recommendations are supported, there will be an internal expression of interest to fill the Supervisor and Community Safety Officer roles. It is anticipated that not all positions will be filled via this route, so some may be advertised externally. The process will begin mid-January

5. Section 151 Officer comments:

5.1 The proposed £335,000 additional budget has been added as a pressure to the 2026/27 budget to be considered in February. Council is still in position to approve a balanced budget.

6. What are the legal aspects?

6.1 The Crime and Disorder Act 1998 defines anti-social behaviour as 'behaviour by a person which causes, or is likely to cause, harassment, alarm or distress to persons not of the same household as the person'.

6.2 The Anti-Social Behaviour, Crime and Policing Act 2014 provides the power for local authorities to set up Public Spaces Protection Orders which includes gives authority to, for example, disperse people and to issue Fixed Penalty Notices.

6.3 Powers relating to preventing littering include prosecution and fixed penalties (Sections 87 and 88 of the Environmental Protection Act 1990). It is an offence to throw down, drop or otherwise deposit, and then to leave, litter under section 87 of the 1990 Act. The offence, as extended by section 18 of the Clean Neighbourhoods and Environment Act 2005, applies to all places that are open to the air, including private land and land covered by water.

6.4 Section 111 of the Local Government Act 1972 grants a wide discretion to local authorities to take steps calculated to discharge its statutory functions. That includes the provision of budgets and staff in order to achieve its functions.

7. Monitoring Officer's comments:

7.1 The Monitoring Officer has no additional comments.

8. Equality Act 2010 (The Act)

8.1 In recommending this proposal potential impacts have been identified on people with protected characteristics as determined by the Act and an Equalities Impact Assessment has been included in the background papers for Member's attention.

9. Carbon Footprint (Environmental) Implications:

9.1 There are no direct carbon or environmental impacts arising from the recommendations. The CST will locate themselves within the City Centre, they have access to an electric van. The electric van carries equipment for emergencies, such as cones, tape and a first aid kit. Patrols within the City Centre are on foot.

10. Report details:

10.1 The pilot CST has been operating since July 2024 to undertake visible foot patrols across the city centre, Officer's actively engage with members of the public and the business community to address persistent ASB.

10.2 Two officers moved across from Car Parking to CST, on a secondment until 31 March 2026. Their substantive Civil Enforcement Officer roles in car parking, included addressing ASB within car parks, picking up stray dogs, issuing notices on encampments across the wider city; as well as undertaking patrols to check customers had paid for their parking. Two additional officers have been recruited through an agency, with a temporary contract until 31 March 2026.

10.3 The CST wear Body Worn Video Cameras to gather evidence for any ASB activity they encounter. The Body Worn Video Cameras act in an overt way, with individuals informed that they are being filmed. If the CST encounter ASB, this is called into the Control Room, so that CCTV cameras are focused on the location. Devon & Cornwall Police are called if ASB escalates and if illegal activity is encountered.

10.4 As part of their role, the CST has also been responding to encampments and collecting stray dogs from across the wider city.

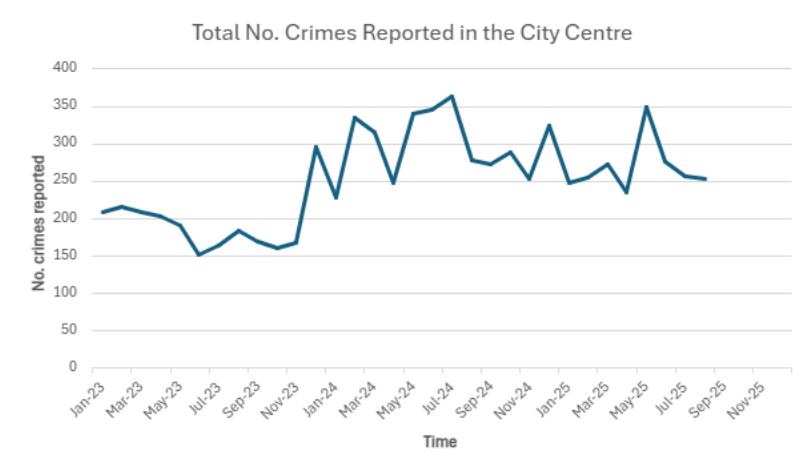
10.5 Since October 2024, 496 dispersal notices have been issued within the PSPO area, ranging from 6-24hrs. Individuals can be dispersed for multiple reasons, as highlighted in the table below.

Reason	Reason for dispersal
ASB	214
Other	78
Drinking alcohol	42
Shoplifting/Theft	39
Swearing	26
Fighting	21
Drug taking	21
Drunk & Disorderly	19
Shouting	16
Breach of CPW	8
Possession of drugs	7
Begging	5
TOTAL	496

10.6 As part of funding requirements, CST has been recording roles and activity undertaken in the City Centre. This data forms part of the agreements held with InExeter and Devon & Cornwall Police & Crime Commissioner.

Community Safety Team Outputs	
01/07/2024 – 30/10/2025	
Foot patrol hours delivered	5,936
Interactions with members of the public	17,434
Business visits	9,300
ASB incidents attended	730
Items of Intelligence submitted to community intelligence systems	168
CSAS powers exercised	232
Safeguarding referrals made	30
Stray dogs collected	29

10.7 The total number of recorded crimes in the City Centre is shown below. Data is sourced from: <https://www.police.uk/pu/your-area/devon-and-cornwall-police/exeter-city-centre/?tab=crimemap> The CST is there to address low level activity and to support the Police in gathering evidence, with action against illegal activity taken by the Police. Comparing January through to September 2025 to 2024, all recorded crime in the city centre reduced by 9.7%. For ASB specifically, this reduced by 15.3% in the same period.



10.8 During the pilot, the Devon & Cornwall Police & Crime Commissioner, and InExeter have contributed to its running costs of CST. Funding agreements have been in place with each organisation. The table below highlights income sources:

Organisation Income	2024/25	2025/26	2026/27	2027/28	2028/29	2029/30
ECC existing budget	£0	£32,700	£32,700	£32,700	£32,700	£32,700
InExeter	£33,750	£45,000	£45,000	£45,000	£45,000	£45,000
D&C Police & Crime Commissioner	£50,000	£46,153	£0	£0	£0	£0
TOTAL	£83,750	£123,853	£77,700	£77,700	£77,700	£77,700

10.9 As part of the funding from the Police & Crime Commissioner, the CST supports the Police in their City Centre HotSpot policing initiative in areas that have high levels of ASB and criminal activity. CST patrol hotspot areas for a total of 90 minutes each day. The areas that the Police and the CST patrol, is governed by data gathered by the Police and has evolved and changed over time. As part of the HotSpot policing initiative, the CST is required to wear police issue trackers to ensure they are patrolling in the targeted areas.

10.10 The Exeter Neighbourhood police team is focused on nine priorities, namely: Engagement, Shop theft, Counter Drugs, Serious and Organised Crime, Evening and Night Time Economy, Violence Against Women and Girls, Violence, Anti-Social Behaviour in the residential areas and Anti-Social Behaviour in the city centre.

10.11 The Strategy for the Exeter Neighbourhood Police team is:

- Places – reclaim contested spaces, this could be a bench or a street.

- Partnerships – create local networks to involve statutory partners, business, residents, charities and initiatives.
- People – marginalise perpetrators behaviour, which seeks to understand individuals and address behaviours.

10.12 During 2025, the CST as well as Exeter City Council were accredited as part of the Community Safety Accreditation Scheme (CSAS), overseen and managed by Devon & Cornwall Police. The geographical area in which the CSAS accredited officers are eligible to use their powers is within Exeter City Centre, as outlined within the CST role profile.

The main purposes of CSAS is to:

- Have access to and share information and intelligence with Devon & Cornwall Police.
- Power to require name and address for a relevant fixed penalty offence.
- Power to require name and address for anti-social behaviour.
- The power to require name and address for a relevant offence. Relevant offences are those outlined by the Public Spaces Protection Order (PSPO) or byelaws.

10.13 As part of continuous improvement, there will be a review of these CSAS powers in May 2026, which will also consider the wider role of the CST.

10.14 The Ministry of Housing Communities and Local Government recently awarded the City Council a Rough Sleeping Prevention and Recovery Grant (RSPARG). £100,000 of the grant funding has been allocated to the CST, which has a specific remit in working with street attached community to reduce associated ASB and working closely with Housing Outreach to respond swiftly to new encampments. Two additional roles have been recruited into to provide an additional shift that operates mid-afternoon until 22pm, 5 days a week for a minimum of 12 months. At the end of the 12-month period, the proposed outcomes will be evaluated:

- Reduce street based ASB;
- To swiftly act when new encampments appear;
- Link in with Outreach to ensure a joined-up process; and
- Respond to public complaints associated with the above

10.15 As a result of the Council's restructure in 2024, the Strategic Director for Place took on responsibility for Community Safety, which included the management and coordination of the Community Safety Partnership, Safer Exeter.

10.16 In addition, the Head of Service City Centre & Net Zero has taken on a greater operational role in managing the CST and the CCTV Control Room. It is proposed that one role is established to support the Strategic Director for Place and Head of Service City Centre & Net Zero to coordinate a wide range of activities to bring together local partners to formulate and implement strategies to tackle crime, disorder and ASB in communities, and linking to the Safer Exeter annual priorities and Action Plan.

11. Future of Community Safety

11.1 During 2025, an internal audit of the Council's 'Community Safety and Antisocial Behaviour' activities was undertaken. The audit identified several areas of good practice and some areas for improvement around process and policy, which have been drawn into this proposal of developing the CST.

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11.2 It is proposed to expand the Team to 6, as well as adding a new Community Safety Team Supervisor. The expansion of the CST will enable officers to patrol our parks and open spaces and neighbourhood shopping precincts to address ASB concerns and is a response to evidence from the 2025 residents survey.

11.3 The CST is there to support the Police, not to undertake their duties in addressing illegal and criminal activity across Exeter.

11.4 It is also proposed to introduce a Community Safety Partnership Manager. This role will be the main point of contact for Exeter's Community Safety Partnership, Safer Exeter. The role will be to support the Strategic Director for Place in managing and overseeing activity of Safer Exeter, in developing and delivering the annual Action Plan and in bringing together officers from within City Council, and from city stakeholders, addressing concerns from across Exeter.

11.5 The previous 18 months has been a learning process, to understand what does and doesn't work within CST and what needs to be changed and or improved.

11.6 After discussion with the CCTV Control Room, CST, InExeter and Devon & Cornwall Police, there will be the following changes to CST going forward:

- CST will be based within the City Centre, instead of Oakwood House.
- A new CST Supervisor will be introduced to cover sickness, holidays and training, so officers are not lone working. This role will support CST in business, stakeholder and partner engagement, as well as supporting the Community Safety Partnership Manager in delivering projects and initiatives to address ASB.

11.7 All of the CST roles were Job Evaluated summer 2025. The existing and proposed structure is included in Appendix Two, with supporting Job Descriptions.

11.8 Making CST permanent, adding a Supervisor and a Community Safety Partnership Manager role, supports the results of the 2025 residents survey, as safety continued to be an area of concern for residents. The results of the Safety and ASB section of the Residents Survey are included within Appendix One.

11.9 As part of the Government's Safer Streets Mission, the Prime Minister has recently announced details of the Neighbourhood Policing Guarantee, aimed at restoring and strengthening local policing in every community by the end of this Parliament. A key component of the Neighbourhood Policing Guarantee is restoring confidence in local communities and taking visible action tackling ASB and increasing the safety of town centres and high streets. The government has written to all Police and Crime Commissioners and Chief Constables about ensuring every area is maximising all opportunities, including taking forward immediate steps this summer, in partnership with councils, schools, health services, business, transport and community organisations. Making the Team permanent can be seen as one of those responses.

12. How does the decision contribute to the Council's Corporate Plan?

12.1 The CST contributes to two intended outcomes of the City Council Corporate Plan, under Local Economy - A safe and thriving night-time economy; and People - A safe and thriving city with great things to see and do for everyone.

13. What risks are there and how can they be reduced?

13.1 If CST is not made permanent, there is a significant risk that the Council will not be able address ASB across the city. There is a risk that expectations will be raised by making CST permanent and expanding CST into our parks and open spaces and neighbourhoods. All communications need to be clear on the powers CST have in addressing ASB across the whole city.

14. Are there any other options?

14.1 There are a range of alternative options:

- Allow existing temporary contracts to run their course: This would result in no patrols across the City Centre addressing ASB.
- Extend secondments for a further period of time: Roles have been extended twice, if extended again, this would impact on their employment status.
- Not introduce a Team Supervisor: This would result in CST lone working when there is sickness, holidays and training; which poses a risk to the lone worker.
- Not introduce two roles covering public open spaces: This would result in no patrols within Exeter's parks, green spaces and neighbourhood shopping precincts, addressing ASB.
- Funding from InExeter is re-purposed on different activity: This would reduce the level of external funding received to support CST.
- Not introduce a Community Safety Partnership Manager role: This would result in a lack of resource to manage and deliver activity of Safer Exeter.

Strategic Director Place, Ian Collinson

Author: Head of Service City Centre & Net Zero

Local Government (Access to Information) Act 1972 (as amended)

Background papers used in compiling this report:-

None

List of Appendices:

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