

# Policy & Sustainability Committee

10.00am, Tuesday, 23 May 2023

## Women's Safety in Public Places

Executive/routine Wards Council Commitments	Routine
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### 1. Recommendations

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- 1.1 Committee is requested to note the content of this brief report which provides an update on the work of the Women's Safety in Public Places Community Improvement Partnership.

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# Report

## Women's Safety in Public Places

### 2. Executive Summary

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- 2.1 This report is submitted to provide an update on the work of the Women's Safety in Public Places Community Improvement Partnership, as requested by Cllr Watt during the Policy and Sustainability Committee meeting on 2 November 2022. It provides an overview of the work undertaken by the Partnership between November 2022-March 2023, as well as a plan for next steps and anticipated impacts of the work.

### 3. Background

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- 3.1 Following motions by [Cllr Watt \(29 April 2021\)](#) and [Cllr Osler \(26 August 2021\)](#) on Women's Safety in Public Places, a workstream has commenced to help us understand where women and girls feel safe and unsafe in Edinburgh, what would help to improve their safety, and how such recommendations can be implemented to make Edinburgh a city that is 'safe by design'.
- 3.2 Carrying this work forward is the Women's Safety in Public Places Community Improvement Partnership (WSPP CIP). The WSPP CIP is led by the [Equally Safe Edinburgh Committee](#) and comprises partners from the City of Edinburgh Council, Police Scotland and the Third Sector. It was established in January 2022 and reports to the [Edinburgh Community Safety Partnership \(ECSP\)](#).
- 3.3 The remit of the WSPP CIP focuses on implementing the actions agreed at Policy and Sustainability Committee on 30 November 2021 as well as undertaking additional tasks that support the improvement of safety in public places in the city, such as participating in national community safety events, analysing data and supporting partners involved in community/public safety and Violence Against Women and Girls (VAWG).
- 3.4 This report is a routine six-month update to the WSPP CIP's presentation to the Policy and Sustainability Committee on [1 November 2022](#), with routine reporting continuing annually thereafter.

## 4. Main report

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- 4.1 To date, the most significant piece of work delivered by the WSPP CIP has been the public consultation on Women's Safety in Public Places in the summer of 2022. The report with findings from this consultation ("Phase One") was presented to the Policy and Sustainability Committee on 1 November 2022.
- 4.2 The consultation was re-opened for a limited time in March 2023 to gather the views of residents during winter, when weather conditions, demographics and daylight hours are different. This "Phase Two" consultation gathered a larger than expected number of responses which has provided us with a very rich picture as to women's and girls' feelings of safety in Edinburgh.
- 4.3 The data collected from the Phase Two consultation is currently being collated and analysed, with a view to a follow-up report being produced in the summer of 2023.
- 4.4 During the winter of 2022-2023, the WSPP CIP has also been carrying out the following activities:
  - 4.4.1 Detailed analysis of mapping data provided by residents on specific locations that feel safe and unsafe to identify 'clusters' and to produce heatmaps with additional information
  - 4.4.2 Exploring opportunities for further collaborations with relevant experts with a range of professional backgrounds and disciplines which may be relevant to women's safety in public places such as licensing, academia, planning and design
  - 4.4.3 Supporting the development of Police Scotland's 'E' Division's 'Operation Nightguard': a new pilot approach to policing Edinburgh's vibrant nighttime economy with a focus on intervening when 'low level' harassment is witnessed so that there is no further escalation and abuse and violence against women can be prevented
  - 4.4.4 Regularly liaising with Violence Against Women Partnerships throughout Scotland who have carried out similar work, particularly around the delivery of a campaign targeting men's and boy's behaviour towards women and girls in public places. The Communications Subgroup of the WSPP CIP is actively working to collect information on the key elements of an effective campaign, and to learn from the experiences of partners throughout the country.

## 5. Next Steps

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- 5.1 The initial next step in the work of the WSPP CIP will be the analysis of data gathered through "Phase Two" of the Women's Safety Consultation (March 2023). This data will help us to compare findings between the two consultations to explore variations in views and feelings of safety with a particular interest around seasonal and population variation.

- 5.1.1 Once the “Phase Two” analysis is complete, an addendum to the report will be compiled and presented to the Edinburgh Community Safety Partnership in due course.
- 5.1.2 The WSPP CIP is working with colleagues in Communications to create a plan for raising awareness of this data, once the report writing is complete. We strive to ensure that all colleagues working in relevant disciplines who could benefit from this information will be able to access it.
- 5.2 We will be looking to deliver a campaign targeted at men and boys addressing their attitudes and behaviours towards women and girls in public places. We hope to deliver this during the later months of 2023; however, we are making sure to plan slowly and carefully so that a campaign on this topic can be as successful as possible. To ensure this, we are exploring opportunities for collaboration with organisations and services working in communities who can support the campaign, and/or capitalise on its messaging to ensure that positive change is brought about.
- 5.3 We will also be exploring the possibility of implementing suggestions by residents that might improve feelings of safety in particular areas. Some of those might involve additional costs or may have an impact on the environment (please see sections 6 and 7 below). The WSPP CIP will engage with colleagues on an ongoing basis to come up with innovative ideas and solutions that can improve safety in public places while minimising financial and environmental impact as far as possible.
- 5.4 The WSPP CIP together with the ESEC will continue to support our colleagues in Police Scotland’s ‘E’ Division in the development of ‘Operation Nightguard’ to ensure that effective preventative interventions can be implemented in the policing of Edinburgh’s nighttime economy.
- 5.5 To ensure that all the above steps are effective, we will be looking to implement trauma-informed practice in all of our work. To achieve this we will be consulting materials from the [National Trauma Training Programme](#), as well as working closely with the Trauma Lead Officer within the Council.
- 5.6 Lastly, the WSPP CIP will be using opportunities to improve women’s safety in public places to ensure that Equally Safe principles run through all policies and workstreams undertaken by the ESEC and its partners, including statutory services and organisations. We see this as an excellent opportunity to promote equality by embedding women’s and girls’ safety in all aspects of public life, as well as to prevent harassment and abuse in the public spaces of Edinburgh.

## **6. Financial impact**

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- 6.1 It is expected that some of this work will carry a financial impact directly related to the delivery of the campaign on women’s safety in public places. The cost for this (£7000) had been initially agreed as part of the Public Protection Budget for 2022-

2023; however, as this campaign has not yet been delivered, we have agreed that the cost for it will be carried forward to the financial year 2023-2024.

- 6.2 It is possible that changes recommended in planning activities might carry additional costs. This is something that we are working to determine with colleagues in Planning in the hopes that costs for implementing measures that increase women's safety can be absorbed in the planning process with a view to becoming standardised features and considerations in any future planning activity.
- 6.3 Any additional costs anticipated will be discussed in due course and discussed in follow-on reports both to the ECSP as well as to the Policy and Sustainability Committee in future.

## 7. Stakeholder/Community Impact

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- 7.1 The WSPP CIP is proud that its activities and workplan are set following direct consultation with the community, as well as organisations and services directly supporting women and girls who may have been affected by harassment, violence and abuse in public places in Edinburgh. The workstreams currently in progress are the direct result of community engagement as well as through evidence-based practice locally, nationally and internationally.
- 7.2 The work on Women's Safety in Public Places aligns with a number of priorities set out on the [Council Business Plan](#). Specifically:
- 7.2.1 Wellbeing: The WSPP CIP supports the following actions:
- "Improved safety and wellbeing for vulnerable citizens"
  - "Make better use of the Council estate and resources to meet our strategic priorities"
- 7.2.2 Sustainability:
- "On track to deliver our 2030 net zero target"
  - "The city has a well-connected and sustainable transport and active travel network"
- 7.2.3 Ending Poverty:
- "More residents experience fair work and receive the living wage"
  - "Increasing attainment for all and reducing the poverty-related attainment gap"
- 7.2.4 Although not obvious at first glance, all of the above priorities link significantly with Women's Safety in Public Places. Research has demonstrated that there is a significant reciprocal relationship between women's vulnerability, mobility and the poverty experienced by women. Evidence for this comes from [research on the design of public spaces](#) as well as the planning and operation of [public transport](#).
- 7.2.5 Women experiencing poverty and inequality are less mobile than men, and have fewer opportunities to meaningfully participate in the job market to

improve their financial standing. This further increases their vulnerability and can exacerbate the poverty and lack of opportunity they experience.

- 7.2.6 Conversely, [women have been shown](#) to be more considerate of the environment, and to choose 'greener' options for transport and travel. This indicates that greener, more environmentally friendly modes of active travel and transport will likely support women's mobility and their active participation in society and in the job market.
- 7.2.7 This evidence can also provide solutions to conflicts between competing agendas:
- 7.2.8 An example of this is lighting-women and girls have told us that lighting is the key factor that determines how safe or unsafe they feel in public places. However, increasing lighting levels will have an impact on energy consumption, energy costs and the environment.
- 7.2.9 As mentioned in the main report, the WSPP CIP will engage with colleagues on an ongoing basis to come up with innovative ideas and solutions that can improve safety in public places while minimising financial and environmental impact as far as possible.
- 7.2.10 In all cases, it is important for us to consider the benefits of safer public spaces in terms of physical and mental health, active travel and the active participation of women and girls in public life and in the employment market against financial and environmental impacts and possible ways of mitigating those.

## **8. Background reading/external references**

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- 8.1 [“Relevance of Gender in the Policy Area: Regional Policy”](#) – Report of the European Union's Knowledge Centre on Gender Equality.
- 8.2 [“Relevance of Gender in the Policy Area: Transport”](#) - Report of the European Union's Knowledge Centre on Gender Equality.
- 8.3 [“Get Home Safe”](#) – report by Atkins
- 8.4 [“Women's Safety in Public Places”](#) – motion to the City of Edinburgh Council, 29 April 2021
- 8.5 [“Creating a Safer First and Last Mile Journey for Women and Girls”](#) – motion to the City of Edinburgh Council 26 August 2021
- 8.6 WSPP CIP [Report to the Policy and Sustainability Committee](#): 1 November 2022.
- 8.7 The [City of Edinburgh Council Business Plan](#): Our Future Council, Our Future City.

## **9. Appendices**

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- 9.1 None.