

## **Safer Streets Fund**

This brief provides information about the Safer Streets Fund (SSF) which has been made available to the Community Safety Partnerships (CSP) across the country by the Home Office (HO) with aim of tackling crime.

The 1<sup>st</sup> round of the SSF was launched in January 2020. The 4<sup>th</sup> and latest round, specifically designed to help reduce Anti-Social Behaviour (ASB) and Violence and Intimidation Against Women and Girls (VIAWG) in the Stroud District, was concluded on 15 May 2023.

Stroud CSP, made up of local partners including Stroud District Council (SDC), Stroud Policing Team and Stroud Town Council (STC) were invited to apply for up to £50,000 to help fund initiatives and projects. The application had to be returned to the Office of the Police & Crime Commissioner (OPCC) who would ensure that the application meets the HO's strict criteria and contained enough supporting evidence.

Our application focused on Target Hardening Environmental Improvements and Prevention. Both themes compliment the OPCC's ASB and VIAWG strategies which are particularly prevalent at this moment in time given the recent sexual assaults in the Stroud town centre and the murder of a Chapel Street resident, in 2022.

Our application included the following.

### **Environmental Improvements**

Cut back, clearance and tidy of the footpath between Stratford Park and Paganhill (described a Rape Alley by a distressed resident at the Stroud Community meeting in January 2023).

**£2,500.00**

Cut back, clearance and tidy of the footpath between A419 and Church Lane towards St Cyrs Church, Stonehouse (improvements were identified by a local resident at the Stroud Community meeting in January 2023).

**£4,300.00**

Repair works, bin store re design and improved lighting at Chapel Street, Stroud (improvements were identified following feedback from local residents, STC and SDC officers).

**£17,500.00**

Supply and fit of raised flower beds and benches a in the Paganhill Estate, Stroud (Stroud Police conducted an environmental audit with SDC officers and concerned Ward Councillors and members of the public).

**£4,500.00**

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Improved lighting and CCTV in Bank Gardens, Stroud (Identified by STC who reported that the route is not well lit and that there are regular issues with ASB in the area.

**£10,000.00**

Prevention

Introduction of 2 x Night Safe Officers to patrol the Stroud Town Centre Friday and Saturday evenings 8pm – 2am (following feedback from members of the community who have said that they feel unsafe).

**£11,040.00**

I am pleased to report that our application was successful and the OPCC were happy to fund £49,840.00 to cover the costs of our initiatives and projects.

We will use the Community Payback scheme (offenders of less serious crimes are sentenced to undertake a set number of hours of unpaid community work (overseen by the Probation Service) so that they can “payback” the community they offended against. This can primarily involve jobs such as litter picking, removing fly tipping painting etc) and where possible, work with local contractors to conduct the Environmental Improvements. These improvements will include, cutting back overgrown trees and hedges, clearing and disposal of rubbish, repairing damaged fences and improving lighting.

As per the HO’s criteria, we will conduct further consultation with the local community and involve them in the process. In addition to the positive impact these improvements will have on reducing ASB and VIAWG, the enhanced visual appearance of these areas should help people feel safer in their local communities.

Two Night Safe Officers will start patrolling the Stroud town centre between 8pm – 2am every Friday and Saturday from 1 July 2023. This provision will initially be rolled out for a trial period of 3 months. If successful we will be keen to extend the service further and will look to secure additional funding from the next round of SSF.

We will work in partnership with Gloucester City Safe who provide a similar service for Gloucester City Council. The introduction of the Night Safe Officer scheme in Gloucester has not only helped reduce ASB and VIAWG but has boosted the night-time economy by protecting local businesses helping them flourish during these challenging financial times.

Key partners within SDC, Stroud Policing Team and STC will oversee these works to ensure that they are delivered on time, to the expected standard and are within budget. We will involve the community members and feedback on positive outcomes to the OPCC and local residents.

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