

Memorandum

24 June 2024

To: City Centre Advisory Panel

Subject: Draft City Centre Community Safety Plan

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Purpose

1. To seek indicative feedback and advice from the City Centre Advisory Panel on the draft City Centre Community Safety Plan (the draft safety plan) and its priorities.
2. To provide an update and seek feedback on allocation of the increased safety investment made possible via the city centre targeted rate.

Summary

3. The draft safety plan, attached to this memo, responds to the priorities outlined by the panel and articulated in the City Centre Action Plan 2023-34.
4. Staff are seeking discussion, indicative feedback and advice from the panel, particularly around prioritisation of initiatives and any gaps in stakeholder engagement, to inform the development and finalisation of the plan.
5. Two prior safety workshops have been held with the advisory panel over the last 12 months and the plan and its priorities respond to the feedback received. As well as introducing the draft safety plan, this paper provides new information around the planned allocation of \$2 million from the city centre targeted rate to support implementation of the plan in the 2024/2025 and 2025/2026 financial years. Once finalised, this funding support will be recorded in the final document.
6. The document has been prepared with input from many groups including this panel, the longstanding Community Safety Taskforce, the Waitemata Local Board, Mayor's Office and key partners such as the police, business associations, Ngāti Whātua Ōrākei, MBIE and key social sector organisations such as the Auckland City Mission and Lifewise.
7. Further targeted review of the draft plan will take place over the coming weeks, prior to going to council's Regulatory and Safety Committee.
8. The plan has been developed collaboratively and will require a joint implementation approach to be successful in building community confidence.

Background and context

9. Improving safety and increasing community confidence in the city centre is a complex issue that requires a multifaceted approach. Success relies on a number of different participants working together in partnership: local and central government agencies, business and business associations, the police, social sector, community groups, private sector organisations, city users and residents all play a part.
10. The council group's [City Centre Action Plan](#), (the implementation pathway for the City Centre Masterplan) identified the need to establish a multi-agency approach and safety action plan to set priorities and respond to issues of safety and anti-social behaviour.

11. In response, Auckland Council, together with Eke Panuku, has committed to work with partners across the sector to develop an integrated City Centre Community Safety Plan, which would underpin a more coordinated approach to dealing with safety and anti-social behaviour.
12. The objective of this plan is to provide coherence around the collective work within the council group and our partners (i.e. central government, police, Ngāti Whātua Ōrākei, Heart of the City, K'Rd Business Association) to:
 - provide greater clarity and confidence in the work that we are collectively doing.
 - promote a stronger joint agency approach to safety (antisocial behaviour) in the city centre with clear accountabilities, roles and funded actions.
 - enable more effective identification of gaps in the collective safety work programme, enabling these to be addressed and funded via a joint agency approach.
13. Improving public safety and perceptions of safety was recognised by the panel as its top priority for this term.
14. The safety plan was the subject of a March workshop with the Central City Taskforce for Community Safety, led by the community impact team and supported by Eke Panuku and the council's compliance lead.
15. Extensive additional engagement around city centre safety has taken place with key partners including police, business associations, Ngāti Whātua Ōrākei and the City Centre Residents Group.
16. As part of their feedback and advice on the city centre targeted rate investment priorities for 2025 - 2035, the City Centre Advisory Panel endorsed (Resolution number CCAPC/2024/7) at its [29 April meeting](#) an additional allocation of targeted rate funding towards safety initiatives for the next two years.

Key priorities

17. The plan is framed under the three recognised realms of community safety:
 - Protection through urban and spatial design
 - Protection through the management of the quarter / neighbourhood
 - Protection through social connectedness
18. This provides a balance of safety and security and social wellbeing focus. Many of the initiatives within the plan are activities that are already funded and underway across the Council group and its partners.
19. During the development of the plan, additional initiatives were identified to respond to the here and now context - a set of urgent and immediate priorities over which council and its partners have direct control. These are outlined in the plan and represent where the collective focus will be over the next 6-12 months. Many of these initiatives are already underway, either by the council group or its partners who have committed significant time and resources to this issue.
20. From the priorities above, the group has identified a ten-point plan for focus over the coming 12month – 2 year period:
 - **'Together for Tāmaki Makaurau'** - Launched in December 2023, the initiative focuses on collaborative patrols, and improving communication and data sharing. This includes NZ Police, CityWatch, Māori Wardens, Community Patrols NZ, AT and others as well as the potential expansion to work with private sector security.
 - **Advocacy** - Working with our partners, including central government and NZ police, particularly around police presence, housing and drug and alcohol issue.
 - **Safety Hubs** - Located at Queens Wharf, High Street and Day Street these operate as bases for community patrol teams, including Maori wardens and Community Patrols NZ, to collaborate and coordinate. Operating hours vary between the sites and will expand as volunteer numbers grow.

- **City centre community patrols coordination and expansion** - Funded by the Mayor's office this role coordinates the safety hubs and groups that use them; Community Patrols NZ, Māori, Pacific and Community Wardens, and ethnic patrol groups. The role has already resulted in a successful volunteer recruitment drive, and a sustainable partnership model with the police and AU, for ongoing community patrols.
- **Expansion of City Watch** - A trial expansion of the CityWatch team from 6 to 18 personnel. Includes more investment to help the team work with community groups to better understand and respond to complex needs and behaviours. The expanded team will patrol larger areas and known hotspots including Te Komititanga, Queens Wharf, and Midtown.
- **Audit of and investment in central city lighting** - Working with Auckland Transport to assess key areas of concern and identify central city through-ways that need better lighting.
- **Community support and outreach** - Investment in groups that ensure our approach includes social and wellbeing support. This includes advocacy to improve mental health and dependency services.
- **Enhanced CCTV monitoring** - Additional resource to help the council partner with police and Auckland Transport in CCTV monitoring.
- **Nighttime Economy pilot initiatives** - Tataki Auckland Unlimited led this research to better understand the nighttime economy, and findings reinforced the need for improved community confidence around city centre safety.
- **Alcohol harm prevention** - Working across partners, NZ Police, compliance teams and the hospitality industry to reduce harm related to excessive alcohol consumption.

Delivering on the plan

Role of the council group and partners

21. Noting the multifaceted and inter-agency approach required, the council group's proposed role is to drive coordination and accountability across all the various agencies who play a part in this complex space. This will provide a clear articulation of the responsibilities of council group as well as the critical work of our partners – many have been working on these issues for a very long time and have invested significant resource. That expertise is critical to success and needs to be resourced to ensure that we are able to demonstrate the impact of the complex investment by all partners in this area.

Role of the city centre targeted rate

22. As requested by the panel, a temporary allocation of funding from the city centre targeted rate will go towards a mix of safety and social wellbeing initiatives over the next two financial years. This funding support will be recorded in the final draft plan.
23. Council staff, in conjunction with partners, have assessed where this additional investment can have the most impact and have recommended four initial focus areas:

City Watch expansion

24. For the period from March 2024 to end of June 2024, funding from the Mayoral safety fund enabled CityWatch to expand its resourcing levels from 6 to 12 patrollers. This funding expires at the end of June 2024.
25. The continuation of the expanded City Watch programme beyond its current funding to 30 June, for a further two years, and a further increase to 18 patrollers, is seen as a priority due to its benefits in terms of enhanced frontline presence and perceptions of safety within the city centre.

26. This funding will also allow the team to grow to provide greater coverage of the city centre, as well as improve their ability in working with rough sleepers and street whānau through dedicated support in this space.
27. Impact:
 - Reduced real and perceived anti-social and criminal activity.
 - Improved welfare outcome due to a frontline patrol service integrated with social wellbeing agencies.
 - Increased public confidence in city centre safety.

Assertive outreach

28. In conjunction with the expansion of City Watch, there is a need to enhance our capacity in the assertive outreach space to improve health and housing outcomes for street whānau, rough sleepers, and the housing insecure.
29. Assertive outreach is guided by principles of choice, harm reduction, recovery, and community integration. The funding in this area will enable three additional outreach kaimahi (staff) dedicated to the city centre and includes at least one kaimahi with an 'Alcohol and Other Drugs' (AOD) specialisation. This is seen as an important opportunity to trial the impact of this higher level of specialised support in supporting street whānau with complex and multiple diagnoses.
30. Impact:
 - Increased engagement with homeless individuals, leading to higher support service uptake.
 - Reduced homelessness through proactive outreach and early intervention.
 - Advocacy for mental health and addiction services, improving quality of life.

Coordination and accountability

31. The council group has identified the need to take on a stronger facilitation role to improve coordination and accountability across this complex response. We propose doing this through a new part time contract safety project manager to provide dedicated oversight of the implementation of the safety plan including monitoring, accountability and escalation to advisory and governance groups, including the advisory panel, as required.
32. Impact:
 - Evidence-based and transparent delivery of safety plan activities;
 - Increased stakeholder confidence in council and other safety partners to deliver positive community safety and wellbeing outcomes;
 - More proactive focus on and response to hot-spots and operational issues.

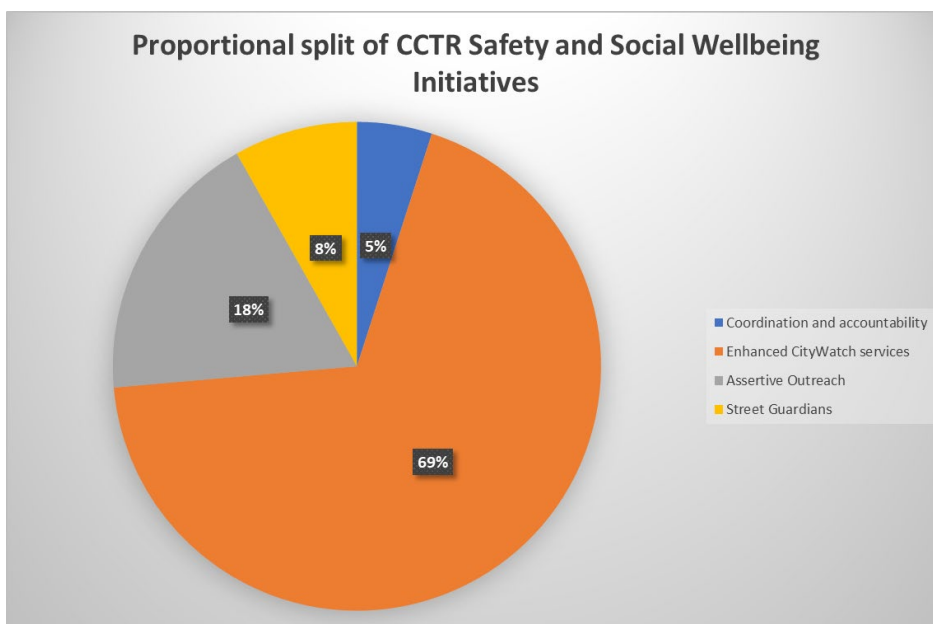
Street Guardians

33. Street Guardians is a programme that provides a positive alternative for those begging in Auckland's city centre. Since it began in 2018, hundreds of people have participated. It is delivered by the Auckland City Mission in partnership with Heart of the City (who provide funding support).
34. The benefits are far reaching. It helps people build confidence and skills, some people have transitioned back to work, others to access support services, and across the board it builds people's sense of self. There are also demonstrable environmental benefits with the mahi undertaken with programme's community organisation partners. [A short video here gives a powerful overview of the impact of the programme.](#)
35. It is proposed that the targeted rate contributes additional funding, over and above that already committed, to enable the programme to increase its capacity and reach.
36. Impact

- meaningful alternative to street begging, that consciously considers the needs of those participating;
- Provide street whanau with a route into employment opportunities, along with more regular volunteer work at the Auckland City Mission.
- Support street whanau to engage with other services including access to housing to get off the streets.

Proposed proportional split of targeted rate investment

37. The below chart highlights the proportional split of the proposed funding across the four identified initiatives for FY25. The allocation of funding will be reviewed on a regular basis to ensure that it is having the desired impact and addressing the areas of most need as context in this space changes.



Role of the panel

38. The City Centre advisory panel are being asked to provide indicative feedback and advice on the draft City Centre Community Safety Plan and its priorities, as well as on the allocation of the increased safety investment made possible via the city centre targeted rate.
39. To help frame the workshop and feedback, the panel are being asked to consider the following questions:
- Do we have the right balance of priorities within the community safety plan?
 - Is the CCTR contribution targeting the right areas and initiatives?
 - Are there any partner led initiatives missing from the community safety plan that should be included?
 - How can we strengthen our partnership approach to the implementation of the plan?
 - What does the advisory panel and individual member see as their role in the implementation of the plan?

Next steps

40. Staff will take on board the panel's feedback from the workshop in finalising the city centre community safety plan prior to seeking approval via the Council's Regulatory and Safety committee in August.

41. Advisory panel endorsement of the plan and its priorities would underscore the importance of this work. The next advisory panel meeting takes place after the Regulatory and Safety Committee so endorsement would need to be via email circulation or delegated to the Chair or a working group.

Attachments

Attachment 1: DRAFT City Centre Community Safety Plan

Attachment 2: Security and safety operational update – June 2024

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General/Summary

- There appears to be a general perception in the 'operational security' area of Council Group that performance and indicators are moving in a positive direction.
- Collaboration between organisations is being carried out efficiently, with more positive developments expected to come in this space.
- Positive feedback is being received from the public both direct to patrollers and to Council staff regarding the increase in positive safety perception.
- We are trying to use our CCTV networks to better effect in the detection and prevention of crime – jointing up efforts of TAU, EP, AT, Heart of the City and Police in this respect. There is significant potential to improve this. Precinct Properties have recently enquired how they can be part of this larger network.
- Emergency response/duty phone numbers are shared between HoTC Safety Team and CityWatch staff.

City Watch

- The enhanced CityWatch scheme is proving successful and popular, with 18 patrollers working in shifts being highly visible on the streets (Mon-Sun, 07:00 - 22:00)
- An operation carried out in mid-May in conjunction with Police resulted in an encampment being removed from the Queens Wharf and Te Komititanga area, an area which had been increasingly problematic for a number of months. This has resulted in a great improvement to this key area of downtown. A similar operation was recently carried out for the encampment under the Lower Hobson St flyover.
- Council outreach coordination services worked in close conjunction with the operation, putting many street whanau in touch with outreach services.
- Patrols have systems in place to call in defective streetlights and other maintenance issues, improving the CC experience for everyone.
- There has been significant focus in the Te Komititanga area which has led to a marked decrease in nuisance behaviour, to the satisfaction of residents, business and visitors. Issues are however dispersing to other parts of the city.
- CityWatch now have a focus on reduction of noise-related nuisance being primarily street preachers and unlicensed buskers and progress is being made in this area.
- They have visited specific business owners who the likes of HOTC and CCRG have pointed out to us as having issues or questions.
- They are able to quickly focus on any trouble spots or focus areas which come to light, examples being theft of artwork from Queens Wharf, a seemingly new trend of vandalising low-hanging signs located under canopies on Queen St, Myers Park underpass, etc.

CPNZ / Safety Hubs

- Community Patrols NZ are successfully operating out of two Safety Hubs in Queens Wharf and High St, with expansion planned into Karangahape area and upper Queen St/Greys Ave. Patrols from QW operate 18:00 – 22:00 Fri and Sat night, and also Sat and Sun mornings, whilst the High St hub is staffed 09:00 – 16:30, with patrols operating during daytime hours.
- The volunteer patrollers are active on Friday and Saturday nights, with connections being established with communities and businesses. They average 300 hours per month and have an active recruitment programme under way (in conjunction with AUT and Police).
- CPNZ have set up several joint patrols, generally on Friday and Saturday nights, operating from either Queens Wharf or High St. CPNZ patrollers meet with CityWatch, Maori Wardens and Police to strengthen networks and encourage collaboration.
- AT carpark access has been enabled for CPNZ patrol cars so they have a presence there (in response to rising car crime statistics).

- CPNZ are having discussions with Beam e-scooters around potentially using some of their vehicles for easy transport around the city. H&S considerations would need to be addressed. Through AC Regulatory group, we are in contact with the e-scooter providers regarding safety, curfews and tidiness of their operations.
- Overall, CPNZ consider that the safety hub network is successful, but not yet realising its full potential. Now that CPNZ is established in the City Centre, they require more planning to develop a presence across a network of locations and fully integrate with all safety/security service providers. There is opportunity to develop the Hub concept to include greater Police presence.

Maori Wardens

- Maori Warden group input in the City Centre is largely coordinated by CityWatch, with MW patrollers currently doing around 300 hrs of patrols per month. They do not currently have a central operating base which is hindering efficiency. This is being worked on between CPNZ and MW.
- Council is readying a small premises in Sturdee St to act as a store for homeless belongings (among other things). It will be managed by the Maori Wardens.

Police

- The new Police Community Sergeant is very keen to work with Council on various initiatives and share intel.
- CW and CPNZ are working closely with Police and have attended various joint meetings.

Heart of the City

- Safety team operating 24/7 in the city centre, with dedicated phone line for businesses and active engagement. Also providing back-up to other teams such as CityWatch, private business security, Britomart and Commercial Bay.
- CCTV cameras added in the city to address gaps in coverage, as agreed with Police. HOTC has signed up to Auror crime network to increase evidence base for Police, especially of recidivist offenders. Provided support for CPNZ including patrol vehicle and tools to enable their patrols.
- Police engaged with HOTC on resolving issues, working with HOTC Safety Team, Coffee with a Cop, and Stowatch retail crime network management
- Built business precinct security community for information sharing.
- Antisocial behaviour remains a significant issue for those impacted and HOTC is lobbying along with City Centre Residents for a change in the Public Safety and Nuisance by-law to improve enforcement and create a safe and inviting place for everyone.
- Advocacy to increase Street Guardians to five days a week.
- Ongoing advocacy for more police and a downtown police presence; mental health and addiction services; and better management of public housing, with wrap around services for those who need it.

Waterfront/Wynyard/Viaduct

- Maori Warden group input in the Waterfront is coordinated by Eke Panuku and involves weekend patrols around the Wynyard tidal steps area (Fri and Sat, 19:00 – 03:00).
- CityGuard are also contracted to provide security across WQ and the Marinas, and to assist Westhaven operatives where necessary.
- WQ residents have requested more ownership of the operational security of their area and this is being investigated with CPNZ.
- On receipt of a complaint from Tramco, Eke Panuku has liaised with Police and they said they would increase their patrols in the area.
- A review of Waterfront security and how to optimise and align it with the rest of the City Centre, is under way.

Other organisations

- We have been talking to TAU about a more joined up approach to security in, for example, Queens Wharf and around VEC. TAU have a significant CCTV and security ops base on Queens Wharf (Ferry building) and we plan to investigate efficiencies.
- Similarly, we plan to liaise further with AT Transport Police who are also based out of the Ferry Building.