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Meeting	Community Development Committee
Date	3rd November 2026
Report Title	Unique Voices – Safer Together Initiatives
Agenda Reference	12
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Officer's recommendation:

1. To note attendance at an online seminar delivered by Unique Voice on the *Safer Together* initiative, focusing on early intervention and the prevention of knife crime and serious violence.
2. This report is submitted to Council to note attendance and the key learning points from the seminar.

Attendance and Representation

The seminar brought together representatives from Unique Voice, Wiltshire Police, Crimestoppers, Wiltshire Safeguarding Vulnerable People, Community Safety, Swindon Borough Council teams, secondary schools, support workers and youth charities across the Wiltshire district.

Key Points and Discussion

The seminar highlighted knife crime trends, with statistics presented indicating a 6.1% increase in knife crime between May 2025 and May 2026 compared with the previous year. While offences involving under-18s reportedly fell by 27.61%, 120 offences involved individuals aged 18–24.

Wiltshire Police outlined its approach to tackling knife crime through the four pillars of Prevent, Prepare, Protect and Pursue.

Discussion explored the factors contributing to knife crime, including fear, peer pressure, status, self-protection, gang-related activity and exploitation. The seminar also highlighted concerns about gang activity within Swindon and Wiltshire.

A key theme was the importance of intervention at three stages:

- Pre-crime prevention: Teachers, youth workers, parents and siblings identifying concerns early and supporting young people.
- Intervention and support: Families, neighbours, social workers and police working together to address risks and prevent escalation.
- Post-crime response: Services including A&E and youth justice providing appropriate support and intervention.

Community Safety Measures and Support

The seminar highlighted the value of community-based safety measures, including the availability of bleed kits and knife amnesty bins. This reflects work already undertaken locally through last year's Community Choices initiative, where donations from Owen's World and Swindon Lions Club supported the provision of a bleed kit, and the Council purchased and installed a knife amnesty box next to the defibrillator. These measures demonstrate how community support and partnership working can contribute to violence prevention, emergency response and safer public spaces.

Conclusion

The seminar reinforced that preventing knife crime is a shared responsibility involving society, public authorities, communities and education providers. Early intervention, trusted relationships and effective partnership working are essential to identifying vulnerability, reducing exploitation and preventing serious violence among young people.