

Report to: Cabinet

Date: 4 February 2021

Title: Eastbourne & Lewes Community Safety Partnership – Annual Report (Lewes)

Report of: Ian Fitzpatrick, Deputy Chief Executive and Director of Regeneration and Planning

Cabinet member: Councillor Johnny Denis, Cabinet member for communities and customers

Ward(s): All

Purpose of report: To enable Cabinet to consider the 2020/21 performance of the Eastbourne & Lewes Community Safety Partnership (E&LCSP).

Decision type: Non-key decision

Officer recommendation(s): To note the achievements and activities of the Eastbourne & Lewes Community Safety Partnership in 2020/21.

Reasons for recommendations: For Cabinet to consider progress on delivery of the current Community Safety Plan.

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1. Introduction

- 1.1. Community Safety Partnerships (CSPs) were established under the Crime and Disorder Act 1998, which set out a statutory requirement for public service authorities, referred to as ‘responsible authorities’, to meet regularly to discuss ways of reducing crime and disorder, addressing incidences of anti-social behaviour and minimising re-offending in their local area.
- 1.2. Key members of the Eastbourne & Lewes Community Safety Partnership (E&LCSP) include Sussex Police; East Sussex Fire & Rescue Authority; the Sussex Police & Crime Commissioner; NHS clinical commissioning groups; & East Sussex County Council. Membership can be extended to other key local and voluntary partners as appropriate. Lewes District & Eastbourne Borough Councils play a key role in supporting the work of the CSP by acting as the secretariat, co-ordinating agreed strategic plans and reporting performance. The respective portfolio holders from each council co-chair partnership meetings.

- 1.3. Lewes & Eastbourne CSPs had been working on a joint basis since 2017, and in February 2019 the Sussex Police and Crime Commissioner formally endorsed their merger (a legal requirement). The merger helped align the work of the CSP with Sussex Police's district boundaries and provided efficiency savings that allow more of the Commissioner's budget to be allocated to front line priorities. Cabinet should note that scope is left within the plans to ensure that priorities reflect local issues of concern in each Council area, such as road safety and anti-social driving in Lewes and supporting the street community in Eastbourne. The budget allocated by the Sussex Police Crime Commissioner remains ring fenced for use in the Lewes District.
- 1.4. A strategic planning meeting of the E&LCSP takes place every quarter, whilst the Lewes Joint Action Group (LJAG) meets regularly to identify local issues and risks. LJAG escalates significant issues to the strategy group as appropriate. The CSP works with the county level safety partnership (the East Sussex Safer Communities Partnership) to address broader issues such as organised crime, county-lines and offender management.
- 1.5. The Partnership has continued to meet during the pandemic, postponing only one meeting earlier in the year. Some priorities have been adapted to tackle the pandemic's impact on crime trends, such as the increases experienced in anti-social behaviour and domestic abuse.

2. Our plans

- 2.1. CSPs have a statutory duty to set out a Partnership plan and monitor progress. The latest plan, approved by the Partnership in June 2020, took into account key local issues of concern, such as anti-social behaviour and road safety, as well as the wider strategic priorities of the Police & Crime Commissioner and the Safer East Sussex Partnership. More specifically, the identified priorities are to:
 - Priority 1 - Address the incidence of anti-social behaviour.
 - Priority 2 - Tackle the incidence of hate crime, domestic & sexual abuse.
 - Priority 3 - Reduce the incidence of serious violence & knife crime.
 - Priority 4 - Reduce the incidence of anti-social driving on our roads.
- 2.2. CSPs are awarded an annual grant by the PCC, based on a formula that takes account of population density and an analysis of local crime trends. A review of funding carried out by the PCC in 2018/19 resulted in an increased allocation of £34,829 being awarded to the CSP in 2019/20. The level of funding received this year remained unchanged.

3. Outcomes and performance management

- 3.1. A total of 5,953¹ crimes and ASB incidents were recorded by Sussex Police in the year to March 2020, a rise of 8 percent on the previous year (5,514 crimes). This change resumed a steadily increasing trend, the number of reported crimes having levelled off a year earlier.

¹ Source: Performance Improvement Branch, Sussex Police.

- 3.2. Acquisitive crimes, including burglary (up 21%) and vehicle crime (up 19%) both rose significantly, whilst there were more moderate increases for alcohol related crime (up 7%) and public place violent crime (also up 7%). Reports of domestic abuse rose by 8% across the year, whilst reports of anti-social behaviour fell by 10%, though they remained the most commonly reported type of incident (1,811 reports).
- 3.3. Despite this increase, Lewes continues to be a relatively low crime area. In 2019/20 the District had a recorded crime rate of 57 crimes per 1000 people, one of the lowest, when compared to the Government's 'Most Similar [benchmark] Group'² of community safety partnerships. The average for the group was 75 crimes per 1000 people.
- 3.4. The most recently available figures provide data for the twelve months to the end of November 2020, so reflect the impact of lockdown and the pandemic. Recorded cases of theft, vehicle crime, alcohol related crime and burglary have fallen the most, reflecting business closures and the reduced opportunity to commit such offences. The figures show a moderate reduction in domestic abuse, though the rolling average had peaked earlier in the year, reflecting nationally reported increases during lockdown. Lockdown appears to have had the most impact on anti-social behaviour, with incidents up by 42% on those reported a year ago (2,562 reports).
- 3.5. Key initiatives spearheaded by the Sussex Police & Crime Commissioner to raise awareness of the impact and support available to victims of some crimes such as domestic abuse, hate crime and modern slavery, have met their intended purpose of increasing reported figures. The strict adherence to Home Office crime recording procedures is also a contributory factor to some of these trends, particularly in relation to knife and violent crime, though clearly the level of some categories of crime has seen a real time increase.
- 3.6. Road safety remains a key issue of concern across the District. In the nine months of the year to September 2020 a total of 44³ people were killed or seriously injured on the District's roads. Whilst this is a reduction of 28%, compared to the same period last year, in all likelihood this reflects reduced journeys and traffic volumes resulting from lockdown. Figures between 2019 and 2018 (calendar years) remained unchanged.
- 3.7. These trends have set the tone for the work of the partnership across the last year, which has supported a range of initiatives that have helped; address anti-social behaviour; support organisations tackling domestic abuse; tackle increasing levels of serious and violent crime; and address safety on local roads. Key highlights and achievements across these priorities are set out below.

² 'Most Similar Groups' are districts / boroughs that have been found to be the most comparable to one another based on an analysis of the demographic, social and economic characteristics which most relate to crime. They are driven by census data and published by the Office for National Statistics.

³ Source: Data Portal, Sussex Road Safety Partnership

Priority 1 – Address the incidence of anti-social behaviour:

- Administering the Joint Action Group (JAG), which plays an active role in addressing matters of local concern. Attended by representatives of key local agencies, the group meet monthly to discuss police reports of crime and disorder, identify local hotspots of ASB and agree solutions. This work is supported by a budget of £5,000.
- Working with Sussex Police to support *Operation Blitz*, the local initiative targeted at tackling anti-social behaviour across the District. The operations target patrols at key locations and draw in additional resources at busy times, such as the school holidays. Sussex Police work closely with officers from Neighbourhood & Homes First to share information and co-ordinate follow up actions, partnerships that have proved key in helping tackle the changing ASB trends witnessed during the pandemic.
- Supporting the Seahaven Multi-Agency Safer Communities Operations Team (MASCOT), a Sussex Police led forum, established in May 2020, to specifically target anti-social behaviour, crime and disorder. The Council, the local Youth Offending Team, as well as representatives from local schools and community groups, meet regularly to identify ‘hotspot’ locations, target enforcement and co-ordinate offender referrals to specialist services.
- In any typical year, the Partnership’s funding supports a wide range of youth activities across the District, many of which have not been able to operate due to Covid-19. However, we have been working to promote online activities, such as the youth fitness sessions, provided by County’s Active East Sussex team. We have invited town and parish councils to submit bids to the CSP’s remaining funds (see appendix 1) in January, which we hope can fund the resumption of youth activity schemes in the Spring.

Priority 2 - Tackle the incidence of serious ASB, hate crime, domestic & sexual abuse – through:

- Funding Safe from Harm a project providing emotional and practical support to high-risk victims of hate crime and anti-social behaviour across East Sussex. The programme is set to provide extended support to help address the wellbeing of around 40 victims by the end of the year.
- Contributing to a fund that pays the cost of Domestic Homicide Reviews (DHRs) in East Sussex. These reviews undertake detailed assessments of the circumstances surrounding individual cases and apply learning to systems, processes and the practice of all agencies involved, to help reduce future risk. Four cases have reported to the County level CSP this year, providing valuable insights and learning points in each case.
- Participating in the White Ribbon campaign, which highlights the positive role that men play in preventing violence against women. In November, the Council actively supported the 16 days of action, which this year focussed on tackling isolation, support for survivors and the role that friends and family can play in recognising the signs of abuse, amongst other themes.
- Re-directing funding provided to the *Rita Project*, who were able to re-cycle grant provided to deliver domestic abuse awareness sessions in local schools, to bolster their frontline support service and meet additional demands arising from the pandemic.

Priority 3 - Reduce the incidence of serious violence & knife crime – through:

- Funding *Restore Lewes*, a scheme that works with young people displaying challenging / concerning behaviours. The programme lead will hold individual sessions with those referred, using tools that can help identify and address the underlying issues that may be driving behaviours. One stream of the programme focusses on referrals from Peacehaven Community School (who provide match funding), the other on referrals made by local Youth Offending Teams. The scheme will benefit 50 young people each year and the outcomes are set to improve individual wellbeing, reduce anti-social behaviour and lower individuals' risk of escalation into serious crime and exploitation by County Lines gangs.
- Participating in the Violence Reduction Unit, a Sussex Police and County led task force set up to co-ordinate a strategic approach to address serious violence across East Sussex. This work has been focussed on analysing crime trends, understanding the profile of victims, identifying who the perpetrators of crime are and setting up local action plans.
- Supporting Sussex Police's *Operation Sceptre*, which bolsters the work undertaken all year round to help keep residents safe from knife-related harm in their local communities. The latest 'anti-knife week' took place in November, comprising of increased patrols, amnesty knife bins, education and social media campaigns.

Priority 4 – Reduce the number of people killed or seriously injured on Lewes District's roads - through:

- Promoting road safety and highlighting the impact that anti-social driving has on the daily lives of residents across the District. As a result, the partnership secured the backing of the new Sussex Chief Constable to promote campaigns and set out specific measures to address anti-social driving in Sussex Police's draft *Policing & Crime Plan*. This work has also successfully lobbied to help ensure that road safety issues continue to be effectively represented at East Sussex County Council meetings.
- Supporting the development of local networks of *Community Speedwatch* volunteers and funding the expenses of those delivering training to newly recruited members in Newhaven.
- Continuing a programme of joint Neighbourhood First / volunteer *Speedwatch* visits, in partnership with the Council's Neighbourhood First team.
- Inviting town and parish councils to submit bids to the CSP's remaining funds (see appendix 1) in January, which we hope can fund other initiatives targeted at addressing anti-social driving and improving road safety across the County.

3.8. A summary of the annual income and expenditure for Lewes District's Partnership budget is set out in appendix 1. The pandemic restricted opportunities to allocate funding in the first part of the year, but activities have recovered and almost 70% of the budget has now been spent or committed. We are confident of spending the remaining sum and are intensifying our efforts to identify funding opportunities for road safety initiatives and partners working with young people, whose activities have been disproportionately affected by

national restrictions. Budgets can be rolled over into future years and we will seek authorisation from the PCC to do so in relation to any unallocated sums.

4. Consultation

- 4.1. An ongoing process of engagement is in place to help assess and evaluate the success of projects and other measures supported by the Partnership. Over the past year this has involved key operational representatives, including those from Sussex Police, East Sussex Fire & Rescue Authority and the Safer East Sussex team. They have met regularly to; consider the implications of issues raised by the Lewes Joint Action Group; analyse crime trends; and respond to emerging threats.

5. Corporate Plan & Council Policies

- 5.1. The objectives of the E&LCSP continue to be in line with the LDC Corporate Plan objective of delivering resilient, healthy and engaged communities, through employing strategies that reduce the incidence and fear of crime, tackle anti-social behaviour and work to minimise re-offending. Measures taken to reduce environmental crime and improve road safety raise the quality of the environment for all residents.

6. Business case

- 6.1. The CSP plan sets out the annual approach that the Council, along with other partners, will take to reduce crime and disorder, anti-social behaviour and re-offending across their local area. The current plan identifies five clear priorities, agreed with partners, which will help address local issues up to March 2021. The plan is revised and updated each year, with the new plan due to be signed off by the Partnership in early Spring 2021. It will be supported by an accompanying spending plan, once the Council receives confirmation from the Sussex Police & Crime Commissioner of its 2021/22 budget allocation.

7. Financial appraisal

- 7.1. There are no direct financial implications for the Council, arising from the recommendations set out in this report. However, a summary of the income and expenditure (forecast) managed by the Council on behalf of the CSP is provided in Appendix 1.

Deputy Chief Finance Officer consulted: 29/12/2020

8. Legal implications

- 8.1. This report sets out how the Council has complied, and will continue to comply, with its duties under section 6 of the Crime and Disorder Act 1998 and the Crime and Disorder (Formulation and Implementation of Strategy) Regulations 2007.

Lawyer consulted: 29/12/2020

Legal ref: 009820 – LDC – OD

9. Risk management implications

- 9.1. Reviewing the Community Safety Plan and performance each year provides an assurance that the Council is fulfilling its statutory duties and contributes effectively to reducing the incidence of crime and anti-social behaviour

10. Equality analysis

- 10.1. This report provides an update on progress in meeting the objectives set out in the current Community Safety Plan and as such does not contain any proposals or specific recommendations. As such there are no direct impacts on the public or employees and so no Equality and Fairness Analysis is associated with this report. The requirement to undertake a full Equality & Fairness Assessment will be assessed when we next review the Lewes Community Safety Plan in Spring 2021.

11. Environmental impact analysis

- 11.1. There are no direct environmental impact implications for the Council arising from the recommendations set out in this report.

12. Appendices

- 12.1. Appendix 1 – LCSP Income & Expenditure 2020/21.

13. Background papers

- 13.1. The following background papers are associated with this report:
- Eastbourne & Lewes Community Safety Plan.