

Report to: Scrutiny Committee

Date: 7 February 2022

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

Report of: Tim Whelan, Director of Service Delivery

Cabinet member: Councillor Rebecca Whippy, Cabinet member for disabilities and community safety

Ward(s): All

Purpose of report: To enable Cabinet to consider the 2021/22 performance of the Eastbourne & Lewes Community Safety Partnership (E&LCSP)

Decision type: Non-key

Officer recommendation(s) to the Cabinet: To note the achievements and activities of the Eastbourne & Lewes Community Safety Partnership in 2021/22.

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

Contact Officer(s): Name: Oliver Jones.
Post: Strategy & Partnerships Lead - Housing & Communities.
E-mail: Oliver.Jones@lewes-eastbourne.gov.uk.
Telephone number: 01323 415 464.

1. Introduction.

- 1.1. Community Safety Partnerships (CSPs) were established under the Crime and Disorder Act 1998, which set out a statutory requirement for specified public service authorities to meet regularly to discuss ways of reducing crime and disorder, address incidences of anti-social behaviour, and minimise 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; and East Sussex County Council. Membership can be extended to other key local and voluntary partners as appropriate. Lewes and 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 in Lewes and supporting the street community in Eastbourne. The budget allocated by the Sussex Police Crime Commissioner remains ring fenced for use in Eastbourne.
- 1.4. A strategic planning meeting of the E&LCSP takes place every quarter, whilst the Eastbourne Joint Action Group (EJAG) meets regularly to identify local issues and risks. EJAG escalates issues to the strategy group as appropriate. Portfolio holders and senior council officers routinely attend the county level community safety forum (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 virtually during the pandemic and scheduled meetings have been held as planned over the past year, with a high level of attendance from members.

2. Annual Plan 2021/22.

- 2.1 CSPs have a statutory duty to set out a plan and monitor progress. The latest plan was approved by the Partnership in March 2021, following a review that considered recent crime and anti-social behaviour trends, residents views, and issues of national concern, such as violence against women and girls. It also took into account the wider strategic priorities of the Police & Crime Commissioner and the Safer East Sussex Team, who support the work of the County Council.
- 2.2 For the most part the strategic priorities remained unchanged, retaining an emphasis on; reducing the incidence of crime and ASB; tackling hate crime, domestic & sexual abuse; addressing serious violence; and reducing anti-social driving. The priorities were updated to broaden the scope of the partnership to address organised crime, reflecting the revised goals of key partners, and to promote gender based safety, by creating safe and welcoming spaces to encourage the positive use of public areas by all. The resulting priorities of the partnership in 2021/22 were to:
 - Promote safe & welcoming spaces that reduce the incidence of crime & ASB.
 - Tackle the incidence of hate crime, domestic & sexual abuse.
 - Reduce the incidence of serious violence & knife crime.
 - Address the impact of organised crime on local communities.
 - Reduce the incidence of anti-social driving on the borough's roads.

2.3 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 2019, resulted in an increased allocation of £48,547 being awarded to the CSP in 2019/20. The level of funding received this last year remained unchanged.

3. Crime and incident trends.

3.1 An analysis of recent crime trends continues to reflect the impact of the pandemic. Figures showed a 13.3% reduction in the overall number of reported crime and ASB incidents during the twelve months to March 2021, the timeframe covering the most comprehensive phases of lockdown. Overall, the number of reports fell from 9,356 to 8,109.

3.2 Beneath these headline figures, reports for many categories of crime fell significantly, with the largest decreases recorded for acquisitive crimes, such as burglary (↓37%), theft (↓33%), and vehicle crime (↓32%). These trends reflected the reduced opportunities to commit crime due to business closures, reduced car use, and more people staying at home. The closure of the night-time economy also resulted in much reduced levels of alcohol public place crime (↓17%) and public place violent crime (↓16%). Running contrary to these patterns, the number of ASB incidents rose significantly, up by almost 60% from 2,700 to 4,400 cases, driven by 1,188 reported neighbour disputes (↑80%) and 2,412 reports of 'rowdy' anti-social incidents (↑70%). Levels of reported domestic abuse fell, but remained high (1,707 incidents), whilst levels of hate crime and related incidents remained broadly stable.

3.3 The latest figures for the twelve months to November 2021, reflect a move back towards more 'regular' crime and ASB incident trends. Numbers of reports remain lower than where they were a year ago, but by a reduced amount, down 3.5% as opposed to the 13.3% drop recorded in March. Reports of alcohol and public place violent crime, as well as theft, have all begun to rise as shops and the night-time economy have opened up, though some crimes such as burglary reports remain significantly lower, reflecting the fact that many people still spend more time at home. The number of reported ASB incidents is beginning to fall back, though they remain 36% higher than a year ago, a downward trend that is expected to continue.

3.4 The Borough continues to be a relatively low crime area. The most recent figures from the Government's benchmark 'Most Similar [Crime] Group'¹ of local authorities (June 2021) shows that Eastbourne had one of the lowest crime rates per 1000 people, when compared to other members of the group. With a rate of 82 crimes per 1000 people, the Borough was ranked as the third safest and was below the group average of 96 crimes per 1000 people.

¹ 'Most Similar Groups' are districts / boroughs that have been found to be leading comparators based on an analysis of demographic, social and economic characteristics which most relate to crime. They are driven by census data and published by the Office for National Statistics.

3.5 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; respond to increasing levels of serious and violent crime; support the local street community; and address safety on local roads. Key highlights, activities and achievements across these priorities are set out below.

Priority 1 – Promote safe & welcoming spaces that reduce the incidence of crime and ASB - through:

- Contributing to a range of multi-agency activities focussed on creating safe spaces for women and girls, and reducing the risks present in and around the night-time economy. This work includes; embedding the lessons learnt from the Safer Streets 1 initiative ,which put in place a range of safety and security improvements at key locations across Devonshire Ward; close collaboration with local police to support operations promoting engagement with licenced premises; raising awareness of drink spiking; reducing the harms associated with drug and alcohol use; and providing funding for the Eastbourne Street pastors to recruit and train additional capacity.
- Administering the Joint Action Group (JAG), which meets monthly to discuss local crime and disorder issues, identify local hotspots of ASB, and agree solutions. This work is supported by the CSP budget and members can now approve individual bids up to an increased limit of £2,000.
- Working with Sussex Police to support *Operation Blitz*, the local initiative targeted at tackling anti-social behaviour across the Borough. A recent refresh of the operation has added in weekday patrols at identified hotspot locations and during busy periods, such as the school holidays. Over the past year the operation has helped address numerous incidents of ASB and helped co-ordinated the activities of local police, Neighbourhood First, and Homes First Council officers to help tackle the increased levels of reports experienced during the pandemic.
- Supporting the successful bid to the Home Office’s Safer Streets 3, which has secured funding to improve lighting across a key route in Gildredge Park, improving the safety of local people who and schoolchildren who use the route daily. The project is underway to put in the place the new lighting before the end of March 2022.
- Sponsoring Eastbourne Youth Radio’s broadcast, an established initiative that engages young people deliver a week-long programme of ‘on air’ programmes that discuss a range of topics including mental health and wellbeing, knife crime and bullying.
- Funding the purchase of litter picking equipment to support up to ten community cleaning groups operating in parks, beaches, and open spaces across the Borough.

- Supporting the Council's Neighbourhood and Environment First teams work to keep public spaces across the Borough clean, tidy, and free from rubbish. In the year to date (April to November) the teams dealt with over 1,100 reports of fly-tipping, graffiti, rubbish, and abandoned vehicles. Ease of reporting is facilitated through the *report it* app, which all residents of the Borough can download free to smart devices. The teams employ a range of monitoring and enforcement activities, including warnings, fixed penalty notices, prosecutions, and the deployment of CCTV.

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

- Participating in strategic initiatives to help set the local framework addressing the incidence of domestic abuse. Contributing to the engagement and needs assessments used to develop the draft pan-Sussex Domestic Abuse Strategy, and feeding into the successful Safer Streets 3 bid for Government funds, are both examples of this. Both the strategy and bid will support a range of initiatives, awareness campaigns and education programmes that will benefit residents across the County and Borough.
- Supporting the Homes First team, who have been working in partnership with neighbouring districts and boroughs to establish new pathways for those experiencing or at risk of domestic abuse. A separate initiative has recruited new roles (Independent Domestic Violence Advocates), whose focus will be to help housing needs teams incorporate the new provisions of the Domestic Abuse Act 2021 into operations. The team have also acquired a number of units of respite accommodation, following a successful funding bid to the Department for Levelling Up Housing & Communities, which are now available to meet the urgent re-housing needs of domestic abuse victims.
- Implementing key findings of the Adult C safeguarding adults review, which has been delivering actions to improve the handling of issues faced by individuals presenting with the highest levels of multiple and complex needs, many whom have experienced domestic abuse. The associated action plan has put in place; a new multi-agency forum that will meet to discuss cases and shape solutions around individual needs; revised guidance on 'out of area' placements for women experiencing domestic abuse; a training programme bolstering the knowledge about trauma informed best practice to front line officers.
- Contributing to a fund that pays the cost of Domestic Homicide Reviews in East Sussex. These reviews undertake detailed assessments of the circumstances surrounding individual cases, and apply insights and key learning points to the systems, processes and practices of the relevant agencies involved, to help reduce future risk. Five reviews were considered at the County's Safer Communities Board this year, which both Council member and officer representatives attend.
- Promoting the County's White Ribbon campaign, which this year was aligned with *#16daysofactivism* addressing different aspects of gender based violence.

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

- Participating in the Violence Reduction Unit, a Sussex Police and County led task force, co-ordinating a strategic approach to tackling serious violence across East Sussex. Work in Eastbourne has focussed on addressing issues in three 'high harm hotspots' in Devonshire Ward and the town centre, that account for a disproportionate amount of serious and violent crime. A range of activities, including victim and perpetrator profiling, engagement with local HMO residents, and increased levels of patrol activity have been deployed to tackle the issue. A recent analysis of local crime trends showed that this is having a beneficial effect, with levels of serious and violent crimes now lower across the hotspot areas, when current and pre-covid trends are compared.
- Much of the recent work has focussed on reducing the violence and sexual offences committed against women and girls, and addressing the anxiety they experience in and around the night-time economy. The work referenced above, which has focussed on creating safe spaces, has been supported by analytical work tracking reported incidents, marked patrols, and covert operations that have increased the police presence in key locations, at times of heightened risk.
- Supporting activities to reduce knife crime, which include Sussex Police's *Operation Sceptre*, that drives the year round work undertaken to help keep residents safe from knife-related harm. The operation co-ordinates incident led patrols, social media campaigns, community engagement, knife sweeps and test purchasing. It runs side by side with the *kNOw knives* programme delivered by ESCC's Targeted Youth Service. Part funded by the Partnership, this programme runs prevention sessions that raise awareness of the risks of knife carrying, discusses the related topic of exploitation, and examines the accompanying stereotypes, myths and fears surrounding the issue that are portrayed in the media.
- Continuing to support *Restore Eastbourne*, a programme that works with young people displaying challenging and concerning behaviours. This work, which sets out to improve individual wellbeing, reduce anti-social behaviour, and lower the risk of participants being drawn into serious crime and exploitation, has now resumed following a pause during the pandemic. Over the past year the programme has engaged 45 'at risk' young people at Causeway School, and a further 35 young people referred directly by Sussex Police.

Priority 4 - Address the impact of organised crime on local communities – through:

- Contributing to the new Serious & Organised Crime Partnership, a Sussex Police led, multi-agency collaboration, set up to tackle serious crimes that are being planned and coordinated by individuals working together on a continuous basis. The partnership has an operational focus and has a clear goal of identifying specific crimes that present a high level of threat, risk, and harm to residents, sharing information and intelligence to help disrupt these.

- Supporting the work of Sussex Police's Discovery team, who co-ordinate operations that tackle modern slavery, exploitation, and human trafficking. Partners, including the Council's Homes First, licencing, benefits and democratic services teams routinely work with Discovery to source information on residents and businesses, verify intelligence, and on some occasions accompany visits. These activities help disrupt the activities of organised crime groups and reduce the impact on those they exploit, who may be working a for low, or zero, pay in a variety of settings across the Borough such as restaurants, nail bars, and brothels. The general raising of awareness through communications plans and on social media is another key aspect of work in this area.
- Directly funding organisations that deliver programmes engaging and supporting young people, many of whom have been identified as being at risk of being drawn into anti-social behaviour, more serious and organised crime. These include; youth led activity days at several skate parks across the town; wellbeing mental health coaching workshops sessions delivered in association with local rugby clubs; and tech-led activity interventions designed to boost confidence, self-esteem, and skills.

Priority 5 - Support the street community and address related ASB – through:

- Continuing to support the work of the Rough Sleeper Initiative, who provide comprehensive support and outreach services. Their activities identify rough sleepers and connect with local services, including referrals to an in-house team of multi-disciplinary health, social care, substance misuse & housing professionals.
- Setting up a multi-agency forum with voluntary providers of emergency food and other support services to the homeless and street community. The forum has met regularly across the year to discuss issues, help co-ordinate services and examine ways of putting in place sustainable solutions that look to reduce dependency in the longer term.
- Approving funding for a new set of lockers to provide a safe storage solution that rough sleepers will be able to access to store bedding and other possession during the daytime.
- Reserving funding previously provided to support the weekend day shelter run by the Kingdom Way Trust, which was providing support to up to 60 members of the street community each Saturday and Sunday. Risk assessments undertaken earlier in the pandemic forced the scheme to close, but new premises have now been found, with a view to the re-starting the project early in 2022.

Priority 6 - Reduce the incidence of anti-social driving on the Borough's roads – through:

- Developing proposals to introduce a *Public Place Protection Order* (PSPO) focussed on addressing the incidence of anti-social driving in specified areas of the town. The PSPO, which would be enforced by the police on behalf of the Council, would seek to address specific issues such as speeding, aggressive acceleration and driving, illegal manoeuvres, racing, and excess noise from vehicles. The introduction of the order is subject to Cabinet approval and a subsequent public consultation exercise.
- Working with Sussex Police to identify locations for a new signage campaign aimed at influencing driver behaviours, including speeding, the use of mobile phones at the wheel, and drink driving. The *We're keeping an eye on you* campaign will rotate the signage at chosen locations every three months.

3.6 A summary of the annual income and expenditure for Eastbourne'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 over 65% of the budget has now been spent or committed. The spend is spread across the priorities as shown. The Partnership is now intensifying marketing to maximise spend of the remaining sum, with a particular focus on funding projects and programmes working with young people, whose activities have been dis-proportionately affected by the pandemic. Budgets can be rolled over into future years and authorisation will be sought 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 met regularly to consider the implications of issues raised by the Eastbourne Joint Action Group, analyse crime trends, and respond to emerging risks.

5. Corporate Plan & Council Policies.

5.1 The objectives of the E&LCSP continue to be in line with those set out in the Council's Corporate Plan, which commit to 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 local area for all local residents, visitors, and businesses.

6. Business case.

- 6.1 The annual CSP plan sets out the 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 six clear priorities, agreed with partners, that will help address local. The next plan is due to be signed off by the Partnership in early Spring 2022.

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 current income and expenditure account, managed by the Council on behalf of the CSP is provided in Appendix 1. *Deputy Chief Finance Officer consulted 21/01/2022.*

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: 23/12/21 (Legal ref: 010708-JOINT-OD).*

9. Risk management implications.

- 9.1 The annual Community Safety Plan incorporates a review of high level risks associated with the delivery of CSP activities. These include risks relating to, maintaining adherence to the statutory duties set out in the Crime & Disorder Act 1998, partner attendance, and funding. The risk review provides an assessment of the likelihood, impact and severity of each risk and assigns ratings accordingly, alongside accompanying mitigations.

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 proposals or specific recommendations. As such there are no direct impacts on the public or employees, so no Equality and Fairness Analysis is associated with this report.

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 – Eastbourne CSP - Income & Expenditure 2021/22

13. Background papers.

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

Appendix 1 - Eastbourne Community Safety Partnership – Income & Expenditure 2021/22

Spend by project

PCC Grant 2021/22	£48,547
Spent / committed	£
Restore Eastbourne - BCRP	£5,237
Hotel Watch - BCRP	£4,000
Youth led fund days - YMCA	£1,986
Safe spaces – Eastbourne Street Pastors	£5,000
Domain histing for Neigh. Panels – EBC	£90
Mental health workshops – Balls for Brains	£1,555
Sponsorship – Eastbourne Youth Radio	£365
Mural – Friend of Gildredge Park	£1,150
Litter picking – Environment First	£930
Rough sleeper lockers - Sussex Police / RSI	£1,321
CCTV – Etchingam Road Community Centre	£845
Activity intervention young people – Tech Resort	£3,950
Night-time economy radios	£4,920
Total	£31,349
Remaining funds	£17,198

Spend by priority

