

Report to: Cabinet.

Date: 14 March 2024

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 Christine Robinson, Cabinet Portfolio Holder for Community Wellbeing

Ward(s): All

Purpose of report: To enable Cabinet to consider the 2023/24 performance of the Eastbourne & Lewes Community Safety Partnership (E&L CSP).

Decision type: Non-key

Officer recommendation(s): That Cabinet note the achievements and activities of the E&L CSP in 2023/24.

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 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&L CSP) include Sussex Police; East Sussex Fire & Rescue Authority; The Probation Service; Lewes District Council; and East Sussex County Council. Membership can be extended to other key local and voluntary partners as appropriate, and ESCC Drug Commissioning Services, Crimestoppers and the Office of the Sussex Police & Crime Commissioner are all regular attendees at meetings. Lewes District 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 have worked on a joint basis since their merger was formally ratified by the Police & Crime Commissioner in 2019, although scope is left within the business priorities to reflect the issues of concern in each Council area, such as road safety in Lewes and supporting the street community in Eastbourne. A budget allocated by the Sussex Police Crime Commissioner remains ring fenced for use across the District.
- 1.4. A strategic planning meeting of the E&L CSP takes place every quarter, whilst the Lewes Joint Action Group (LJAG) meets monthly to identify local issues and risks across the town. Portfolio holders and senior Council officers routinely attend the County level community safety forum (the East Sussex Safer Communities Board) to address issues such as domestic abuse, organised crime, and county lines, at a strategic level.

2. Annual Plan 2023/24

- 2.1. CSPs have a statutory duty to set out a plan and monitor progress. The latest plan was approved by the Partnership in July 2023, following a review that considered recent crime and anti-social behaviour trends, residents views, and issues of national concern, such as the impact that the cost-of-living crisis may have on patterns of crime and anti-social behaviour. It also considered the wider strategic priorities of the Police & Crime Commissioner (PCC) and the Safer East Sussex Team, who support the work of the County Council.
- 2.2. The review recommended that the headline priorities of the plan were unchanged, as they remained well placed to tackle the District's current challenges. As a result, the five priorities addressed by the Partnership in 2023/24 remained as follows:
 - Promoting safe & welcoming spaces to reduce the incidence of crime & ASB.
 - Tackling the incidence of hate crime, domestic & sexual abuse.
 - Reducing the incidence of serious violence & knife crime.
 - Addressing the impact of organised crime on local communities.
 - Lowering levels of anti-social driving on the District'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 levels of crime. A review of funding was last carried out by the Sussex Police & Crime Commissioner in 2019, resulting in an increased allocation of £34,829. The level of funding received during this current financial year remained unchanged.

3. Crime and incident trends

- 3.1. An analysis of the latest data shows that for the year to December 2023, 5,850 crimes were reported across Sussex Police's Lewes District, meaning that the number of crimes reported is at a similar level than that in the previous year (5,842 crimes). A summary of reported crimes by type comparing the twelve months to December 2022 and 2023 is set out in appendix 1. It should be noted that reported crime categories are not mutually exclusive and that some crimes will be marked against more than one category.

- 3.2. Beyond this headline figure there were some increases in reported levels of acquisitive crime, most notably reports of burglary (237 crimes) which is an increase of 40%, shoplifting (416 crimes) an increase of 13%, and theft (943 crimes) an increase of 9%. There were smaller increases in organised acquisitive crime(which includes fraud), and vehicle related offences. The cost of living and more opportunities to commit crime as residents return to working at the office, are both likely factors driving these increases, although a proportion of the increase in shoplifting reports is due to partnership work encouraging retailers to log reports in a more consistent manner. Sussex Police are working closely with retailers to understand the issues at play and are also deploying routine operations to target prolific offenders.
- 3.3. Offences relating to violence against the person in a public place (761 reports) fell, ↓9%, whilst reports of violence in a non-public place (1,526 reports) increased marginally, ↑2%. Whilst it is recognised that all crimes have a significant impact on victims, the majority of these incidents were not categorised as serious crimes by the police and levels of serious violence (58 reports) and robbery (38 reports) remain low, although these numbers were higher than in the previous year. Reported knife crime (25 crimes) fell by more than a quarter (↓26% compared to the year before), which is encouraging.
- 3.4. Once other incidents which are not categorised as crimes are taken into account, the number of reports made overall fell slightly (↓0.3%), with increases in recorded ASB reports (↑3%) and domestic abuse incidents (↑11%), off-set by falls in hate crime incidents (↓20%).
- 3.5. Levels of reported domestic abuse (crime & incidents) remained relatively high (1,463 reports) an increase of 6% compared to a year earlier, whilst there was a 6% fall in reported numbers of stalking incidents.
- 3.6. Overall, the District continues to be a relatively low crime area. The most recent figures from the Government’s benchmark ‘Most Similar [Crime] Group’¹, which compares Lewes District with fourteen other local authority areas (September 2023) shows that with a rate of 57 crimes per 1000 people, it is one of the three lowest. This level is well below the group average of 68 crimes per 1000 people. Figures for the benchmark group are set out in appendix 2.
- 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; respond to increasing levels of serious and violent crime; and address safety on local roads. Key highlights, activities and achievements across these priorities are set out below.

¹ ‘Most Similar Groups’ are districts / boroughs that have been found to be leading comparators based on an analysis of those demographic, social and economic characteristics which most relate to crime.

Priority 1. Promoting safe & welcoming spaces to help reduce the incidence of crime & ASB - through:

- Funding six art workshops in Lewes over the summer, which engaged over 90 young people, some of whom had been identified as struggling with attendance at local schools or being at risk of offending or exploitation. Over the coming months some of the children involved will be invited to take part in creating murals to be created at identified locations across Lewes town.
- Supporting the delivery of 6 community 'cycle register' events by funding the purchase of 130 bike marking kits. Volunteers, trained to mark bikes during last year's event delivered the sessions at venues in Lewes, Landport, Neville and Malling, and provided attendees with advice about cycle security and cycle safety information provided by Safer Sussex Road Partnership.
- Working with members of the Sussex Camera Safety Partnership, including the town councils in Lewes, Newhaven, and Seaford, to replace the existing analogue CCTV network with new digitally enabled cameras, digital video recorders and Wi-Fi enabled transmission. The new system, scheduled to go live on the 1st of April, will provide improved imagery, remote access for Sussex Police HQ, and put future proof technology in place for the coming years.
- Working with Sussex Police to support *Operation Blitz*, the local initiative targeted at tackling anti-social behaviour across the District. Over the past year the operation has helped address numerous incidents of ASB and co-ordinated the activities of police, youth outreach services, Neighbourhood First and Homes First council officers, to help tackle identified local issues.
- Supporting the Council's Neighbourhood & Environment First team's work to keep public spaces across the District clean, tidy, and free from rubbish. In the year to date (April to December) the teams dealt with over 330 reports of fly-tipping, graffiti, rubbish, and abandoned vehicles. The teams employ a range of monitoring and enforcement activities, including warnings, fixed penalty notices, prosecutions, and the deployment of mobile CCTV.

Priority 2. Tackling the incidence of hate crime, domestic & sexual abuse - through:

- Taking part in strategic initiatives to address the incidence of domestic abuse. This work involves contributing to the development of joint needs assessments and implementing the two key action plans that set out to improve support services and increase the availability of specialist accommodation in which to re-house victims.
- Directly funding projects offering support through programmes delivering yoga and breathing rehabilitation therapy sessions, targeted at referrals from the local domestic abuse survivors' network. The sessions provided 120 places for local women from across the District, delivering exercises that helped participants to overcome adversity, improve their resilience, and regain control of their lives.

- Continuing to drive forward best practice in managing domestic abuse across the Council, led by Homes First co-ordinated work to assess policies and practice against the Domestic Abuse Housing Alliance (DAHA) standard, an initiative backed by the leading sector specialist organisation supporting housing providers in this field. In moving toward obtaining full accreditation over the past year, this programme of work has launched new Homes First and staff domestic abuse policies, refreshed the staff DA awareness course in line with recommendation suggested by the DAHA team, and added a new resource to the Council's website, providing comprehensive list of local and national agencies that can provide support to victims.
- 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 processes and practices of the relevant agencies involved, to help reduce future risk.

Priority 3. Reducing the incidence of serious violence - through:

- Supporting activities to reduce knife crime, which include Sussex Police's *Operation Safety*, that drives a range of local awareness and enforcement activities targeted at keeping residents safe from knife-related harm. These include incident led patrols, social media campaigns, community engagement, knife sweeps, test purchasing and much more. It runs side by side with the *kNOw Knives* programme delivered by ESCC's Targeted Youth Service. This programme runs prevention sessions in local schools that raise awareness of the risks of knife carrying, discuss the related topic of exploitation, and examine the myths and fears surrounding knife crime and gang culture.
- Working in partnership with ESCCs Youth Outreach Team and Wave Leisure to deliver a programme of activity comprising of targeted and open access youth sports activities, engaging young people identified as at risk. Supported by additional grants received from the Government's Safer Streets 4 fund, the programme comprised of:
 - Forty-eight weekday evening football sessions held at Newhaven F.C., providing 960 places at coaching sessions for local children.
 - Mixed sports activity sessions held at the Downs leisure centre in Seaford during the summer holidays, offering 100 places for local children.
 - Funding 40 free three-month gym / swim passes, targeted at young people identified at risk by the youth outreach service. The sessions, accompanied by mentoring delivered by youth workers also trained to supervise the gym sessions, have received positive feedback from both the young people and partners involved.

Priority 4. Addressing the impact of organised crime on local communities - through:

- Contributing to the *Serious & Organised Crime Partnership*, a police-led collaboration, set up to tackle serious crimes that are being systematically carried out by organised groups. The partnership has an operational focus, identifying specific crimes that present a high level of harm to local residents, then sharing information and intelligence to help disrupt these.
- Directly funding organisations that deliver programmes engaging and supporting young people, many of whom are at risk of being drawn into anti-social behaviour and more serious crime. This year these included providing funding towards the refurbishment of the youth space at the Landport Community Hub in Lewes, which will help expand the range of activities the centre is able to offer to young people, and funding towards material and staffing costs for the *Friday Club* operating from Newhaven Youth Centre. The funding will contribute towards the provision of over 950 places across the year.
- 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. Pilot work conducted in Eastbourne over the past year, is now being rolled out to one identified 'harm hotspot' in each District and Borough. In Lewes, work to profile victims and offenders, engage local statutory and voluntary partners, and map local assets is focussing on Newhaven. This work is in its infancy and will be delivered across the next year.
- 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.

Priority 5 - Lowering levels of anti-social driving on the District's roads - through:

- Funding the purchase of three radar 'speedwatch kits and safety equipment to meet the demands of local residents wishing to set up community Speedwatch groups. The distribution of the kits is co-ordinated by the *Sussex Safer Roads Partnership*, who will also provide training to the new volunteer groups.

3.8. A summary of the annual income and expenditure for the Partnership's budget is set out in appendix 3. During the first three quarters of the year 70% of the available grant (£26,337) has been allocated to a range of community groups, voluntary organisations, and statutory agencies. Where possible opportunities have been taken to draw on match funding to help optimise the impact of the grant. A pipeline of projects is in place which should ensure that the majority of the budget is fully utilised by the end of this financial year.

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, and the Safer East Sussex team. They meet regularly to consider the implications of issues raised by the Lewes Joint Action Group, analyse crime trends, and respond to emerging risks.

5. Corporate Plan & Council Policies

- 5.1. The objectives of the E&L CSP continue to be in line with those set out in the Council's Corporate Plan, which commits to delivering resilient, healthy, and engaged communities, by employing strategies to help reduce the incidence and fear of crime, tackle anti-social behaviour, and 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 five clear priorities, agreed with partners, that will help address local issues. The next plan is due to be approved by the Partnership in the Spring of 2024.

7. Financial appraisal

- 7.1. As the partnership is wholly grant funded there are no direct financial implications for the Council arising from the activities set out in this report. However, a summary of the current income and expenditure account, managed by the Council on behalf of the Partnership is provided in Appendix 1. *Interim Deputy Chief Finance Office consulted 20/02/2024.*

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: 14/02/2024 - Legal ref: 012766-JOINT-KS.*

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. It also looks at how current issues, such as the cost of living crisis, might impact crime trends. 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 – Lewes CSP - Income & Expenditure 2023/24
Appendix 2 – Most Similar Crime Group' benchmark Data, June 2023
Appendix 3 - Lewes CSP – Income & Expenditure 2022/23

13. Background papers.

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

Appendix 1 – Crime reports, twelve months to December 2023

| Lewes | Year to Dec 22 | Year to Dec 23 | Diff | % change |
|---|----------------|----------------|-----------|-------------|
| Total crimes & incidents | 7499 | 7479 | -20 | -0.3% |
| Total Crime | 5842 | 5850 | 8 | 0.1% |
| Criminal damage | 659 | 692 | 33 | 5.0% |
| Arson | 71 | 45 | -26 | -36.6% |
| Rape | 92 | 87 | -5 | -5.4% |
| Other sexual offences | 180 | 193 | 13 | 7.2% |
| Possession of drugs | 93 | 103 | 10 | 10.8% |
| Trafficking of drugs | 12 | 29 | 17 | 141.7% |
| Burglary | 170 | 237 | 67 | 39.4% |
| Theft | 864 | 943 | 79 | 9.1% |
| Shoplifting | 367 | 416 | 49 | 13.4% |
| Serious organised acquisitive crime / fraud | 1103 | 1134 | 31 | 2.8% |
| Vehicle offences (theft of / from a vehicle) | 247 | 256 | 9 | 3.6% |
| Violence against the person (VAP) in a public place | 834 | 761 | -73 | -8.8% |
| Violence against the person (non-public place) | 1498 | 1526 | 28 | 1.9% |
| Possession of weapons | 44 | 64 | 20 | 45.5% |
| Robbery | 28 | 39 | 11 | 39.3% |
| Serious violent crime | 38 | 58 | 20 | 52.6% |
| Knife crime | 34 | 25 | -9 | -26.5% |
| Gun crime | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0.0% |
| Homicide | 0 | 2 | 2 | n/a |
| ASB - Personal | 84 | 141 | 57 | 67.9% |
| ASB - Nuisance | 953 | 923 | -30 | -3.1% |
| ASB - Environmental | 31 | 39 | 8 | 25.8% |
| Total ASB | 1068 | 1103 | 35 | 3.3% |
| Domestic violence crimes | 879 | 909 | 30 | 3.4% |
| Domestic violence incidents | 496 | 554 | 58 | 11.7% |
| Racist crime | 61 | 54 | -7 | -11.5% |
| Race | 93 | 96 | 3 | 3.2% |
| Sexuality | 36 | 35 | -1 | -2.8% |
| Gender | 21 | 9 | -12 | -57.1% |
| religion | 15 | 7 | -8 | -53.3% |
| Disablist | 35 | 19 | -16 | -45.7% |
| Other | 25 | 14 | -11 | -44.0% |
| Stalking and harassment | 778 | 732 | -46 | -5.9% |

Appendix 2 – ‘Most Similar Crime Group’ benchmark Data, June 2023

| Community Safety Partnership Area | Crimes / 1000 residents - June 2023 |
|-----------------------------------|-------------------------------------|
| Cheshire East | 54 |
| South Nottinghamshire | 56 |
| Lewes | 57 |
| South Ribble | 60 |
| Wyre | 61 |
| Rugby | 62 |
| North Somerset | 69 |
| Arun | 70 |
| Hinckley and Bosworth | 71 |
| South Worcester | 74 |
| Epping Forest | 75 |
| Cheshire West and Chester | 76 |
| North Worcestershire | 76 |
| Ashford | 82 |
| North West Leicestershire | 82 |
| Group average | 68.3 |

Appendix 3 - Lewes CSP – Income & Expenditure 2023/24

Spend by project

| | | |
|---------------------------------|---|-------------------|
| Grant | Police & Crime Commissioner 2023/24 | £34,829.03 |
| Other income | Accruals / refunds 2022/23 | £3,290.48 |
| | Total income | £38,119.51 |
| Bid | Organisation | £ |
| U Can Spray CIO | Art workshops - young people | £5,000.00 |
| Cycle Lewes | Bike marking (£674 net £131.47 VAT) | £788.80 |
| Unity | The Nurture Project | £5,918.00 |
| ESCC | Contribution to Domestic Homicide Reviews | £2,313.20 |
| Southern Rail | Banner to support safety sessions | £91.94 |
| Seahaven FM | Ad campaign | £525.00 |
| Sussex Police | Data for CSP funded NOMAD camera | £740.00 |
| Landport Community Hub | Refurbishment of youth space - storage | £2,986.00 |
| Sussex Police | Speedwatch equipment | £1,059.73 |
| Youth Club Provision - Newhaven | SCDA | £6,914.00 |
| | Total spent | £26,336.67 |
| | Remaining funds | £11,782.84 |
| | Remaining accounting for pipeline | £1,980.34 |
| | Total spent as a % budget | 69% |
| | Total - pipeline as a % budget | 95% |
| Pipeline bids 2023/24 | LEWES | £ 2022/23 |
| Warming Up the Homeless (WUTH) | Prison release housing support | £1,802.50 |
| Lewes District Council | Private Sector Mediation Services - 5 referrals | £8,000.00 |
| Total | | £9,802.50 |

Spend by priority

