

Report to: Scrutiny Committee

Date: 5 February 2024

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

Report of: Ian Fitzpatrick, Deputy Chief Executive

Cabinet member: Councillor Margaret Bannister, Cabinet Portfolio Holder for Tourism, Leisure, Accessibility and Community Safety

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 Scrutiny notes 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 Sussex Police & Crime Commissioner; The Probation Service; 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 regular attendees at the meeting. 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 in the Borough.
- 1.4. A strategic planning meeting of the E&L CSP takes place every quarter, whilst the Eastbourne Joint Action Group (EJAG) 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 took into account 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 Borough's current challenges. As a result, the six 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 Borough's roads.
 - Supporting the street community and addressing related ASB.
- 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 £48,547. 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, 11,057 crimes were reported across Eastbourne's police district, a rise of 16.8% when compared to last year. This trend is largely accounted for by increases in reported levels of acquisitive crime, notably reports of shoplifting (1919 crimes) which is an increase of 196%, and to a lesser extent burglary (321 crimes), an increase of 20%. The cost of living, increased activity of organised crime groups

and more opportunities for crime as residents return to working at the office are all likely factors, 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 and the local Business Crime Reduction Partnership (BCRP) are working together to understand the issues at hand and put in place remedies by working even more closely with local retailers and deploying targeted operations.

- 3.2. The rising trends in crime were reflected across the most commonly reported types of crime with criminal damage (1003 reports) \uparrow 15%, public place violence against the person (1754 reports) \uparrow 6%, although violence against the person in a non-public place (2296 reports) fell slightly, \downarrow 2%. It is important to stress that the majority of these incidents are **not** categorised as serious crimes and that levels of serious violence (93 reports) and knife crime (57 reports) remain low. There were no reported gun crimes or homicides in the town in the year to December.
- 3.3. 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. So, for example, many of the shoplifting reports will be recorded against *theft*, *shoplifting* and *serious and organised acquisitive crime*, accounting for the significant increases seen in all three.
- 3.4. Once other incidents which are not categorised as crimes are taken into account, such as those reports of anti-social behaviour (ASB), domestic abuse and hate related incidents, the increase in overall reports (12.4%) is slightly lower. This is accounted for by falls in the number of recorded ASB reports, which dropped by 1.2%, (1,791 incidents) and domestic violence incidents (854), which reduced by 6.7%.
- 3.5. Levels of reported domestic abuse (crime & incidents) fell slightly (\downarrow 4%), although the number of overall reports remained high (2,240 reports). Overall, levels of reported hate crime and incidents remain stable (up slightly at \uparrow 1.4%), although reports relating to race increased (race related crime \uparrow 31% and race incidents \uparrow 15%) and continued to be the highest reported category. Reports relating to religion, sexuality and other hate incidents fell.
- 3.6. Overall, the Borough continues to be a relatively low crime area. The most recent figures from the Government's benchmark 'Most Similar [Crime] Group'¹ (which compares Eastbourne with eleven other local authority areas - September 2022) shows that, with a rate of 99 crimes per 1000 people, it is one of the two lowest. This level is well below the group average of 116 crimes per 1000 people. Figures for the benchmark group are set out in appendix 2.

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.

- 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; 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. Promoting safe & welcoming spaces that reduce the incidence of crime & ASB - through:

- Funding *Best Bar None*, an industry recognised business accreditation scheme which assesses licenced premises against venue management, customer service and community safety standards. The partnership funded a successful launch for the new scheme, which signed up nine town centre venues, a mix of bars, restaurants, and hotels, who completed the accreditation process over the summer. The businesses fared well against the assessment criteria, though a number were required to make improvements to policies and practices around the use of door searches, emergency evacuation plans, and their use of CCTV, to help obtain full accreditation. Businesses are now being signed up for accreditation in 2024.
- Supporting a Sussex Police led campaign of engagement and enforcement activity targeting prolific shoplifters in Eastbourne town centre, first undertaken as part of the national Safer Business Action Week. As a follow up undercover officers now undertake regular covert operations helping to protect those local businesses most impacted by shoplifting, issuing Community Protection Notices to identified offenders and targeting Criminal Behaviour Orders at repeat offenders. The local BCRP is actively working alongside the police to encourage all retailers to report offences via the DISC reporting system or direct to the local neighbourhood policing team.
- Managing the replacement of Eastbourne Town Centre's 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 future proof the technology in place for coming years.
- Working with Sussex Police to support *Operation Blitz*, the local initiative targeted at tackling anti-social behaviour across the Borough. 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.
- Identifying local hotspots of crime and dis-order, such as an alley way to the rear of the Langham Hotel on Eastbourne seafront, in the vicinity of which there have been 29 reports of drug use and drug dealing, and a further 17 reports related to anti-social behaviour. The scene has been assessed and the local policing team have worked with local residents to secure funding for new alley gates that will permanently restrict access to the area. This solution will complement similar measures delivered to the areas using Safer Street 1 funding in 2020.

- Supporting the Council's Neighbourhood First team work to keep public spaces across the Borough clean, tidy, and free from rubbish. In the year to date (April to December) the teams dealt with 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 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 Eastbourne referrals from the local domestic abuse survivors' network. The yoga sessions are run by an organisation called Unity, who have been running successful sessions in Lewes for a number of years, whilst Brighton's Women's Centre will be organising the breathing therapy session in the town. The funding will support the delivery of 190 places across both of the programmes.
- Continuing to drive forward best practice in managing domestic abuse across the Council, led by the HOMES First co-ordinated work to assess policies and practice against the Domestic Abuse Housing Alliance (DAHA) standard, a 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 residents who have experienced domestic abuse.
- 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.
- Supporting BourneThisWay, an organisation forming an alliance of LGBTQ+ support groups across the town, who are working on developing a new pledge. An associated campaign, will ask local businesses and organisations to display the pledge within their premises and/or on their website, to help create and identify safe spaces for the LGBTQ+ community in the Eastbourne area

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 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.
- Sponsoring Eastbourne Youth Radio's annual broadcast, an established initiative that engages young people to deliver a week-long programme of 'on air' programmes, that discuss a range of topics including the risks of exploitation, online safety, knife crime and bullying.
- Working alongside the local Business Crime Reduction Partnership to support the new *Night-time Marshall* service in the town centre. The principle role of the marshalls will be to prevent vulnerable persons becoming victims of crime, help licenced premises control incidents, and support the management of taxi ranks. The service, which started operating this February, will be deployed every Friday and Saturday throughout the year, and is supported by funding awarded by Sussex Police and the Safer Streets 5 fund.

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

- 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 include music production workshops run by Audio Active in Devonshire ward, funding towards material and staffing costs for a new youth club offer to operate out of St. Elisabeth's church in Old Town, and replacement uniforms and equipment for the fire cadet service, who run programmes designed to boost confidence and improve the self-esteem of local young people.
- 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 continues to address issues in identified 'harm hotspots' across Devonshire Ward and the town centre, principally through increased levels of patrol activity, victim and perpetrator profiling. Across the year a dedicated project worker, employed through 3VA, focussed on developing links between statutory partners and

representatives from the local community. As part of this work a *grass roots network* meeting was established to bring local agencies together to identify and explore issues, which continues to meet on a bi-monthly basis.

- 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. Supporting the street community and addressing 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 health, social care, substance misuse & housing professionals.

Priority 6 - Lowering levels of anti-social driving on the Borough's roads - through:

- Overseeing implementation of the new *Public Place Protection Order* (PSPO) focussed on addressing the incidence of anti-social driving in specified areas of the town. The PSPO, which covers roads leading up to Beachy Head, seafront parades and in Sovereign Harbour, is targeted at to addressing specific issues such as speeding, aggressive driving, illegal manoeuvres, racing, and excess noise from vehicles. The order, active between March and October each year, is enforced by Sussex Police on behalf of the Council. In 2023, the first year of its operation, they issued 15 fixed penalty notices citing a variety of breaches including speeding, wheel spins dangerous manoeuvres and vehicle noise. This year enforcement is planned to focus on a number of targeted campaigns.
- 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.

- 3.7. A summary of the annual income and expenditure for Eastbourne's Partnership budget is set out in appendix 3. During the first three quarters of the year just over 80% of the available grant (£40,179) was 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 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 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 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 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 issues. The next plan is due to be approved by the Partnership in the Spring of 2024.

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 Partnership is provided in Appendix 1.

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.

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 - Crime reports, twelve months to December 2023

Appendix 2 - 'Most Similar Crime Group' benchmark Data, June 2023

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

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

Eastbourne	Year to Dec 22	Year to Dec 23	Diff	% change
Count all occurrence numbers	12128	13636	1508	12.4%
Total Crime	9469	11057	1588	16.8%
Criminal damage	872	1003	131	15.0%
Arson	60	53	-7	-11.7%
Rape	143	140	-3	-2.1%
Other sexual offences	268	319	51	19.0%
Possession of drugs	223	270	47	21.1%
Trafficking of drugs	39	65	26	66.7%
Burglary	268	321	53	19.8%
Theft	1591	2850	1259	79.1%
Shoplifting	647	1919	1272	196.6%
Serious organised acquisitive crime	1997	3183	1186	59.4%
Vehicle offences (theft of / from a vehicle)	420	460	40	9.5%
Violence against the person (VAP) in a public place	1656	1754	98	5.9%
Violence against the person (non-public place)	2341	2296	-45	-1.9%
Possession of weapons	127	154	27	21.3%
Robbery	87	114	27	31.0%
Serious violent crime	81	93	12	14.8%
Knife crime	67	59	-8	-11.9%
Gun crime	0	0	0	n/a
Homicide	1	0	-1	-100.0%
ASB - Personal	140	126	-14	-10.0%
ASB - Nuisance	1560	1558	-2	-0.1%
ASB - Environmental	113	107	-6	-5.3%
Total ASB	1813	1791	-22	-1.2%
Domestic violence crimes	1415	1386	-29	-2.0%
Domestic violence incidents	915	854	-61	-6.7%
Racist crime	113	148	35	31.0%
Race	193	222	29	15.0%
Sexuality	58	39	-19	-32.8%
Gender	9	14	5	55.6%
religion	22	18	-4	-18.2%
Disabilist	36	42	6	16.7%
Other	34	22	-12	-35.3%
Stalking and harassment	1130	975	-155	-13.7%

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

Community Safety Partnership Area	Crimes / 1000 residents - June 2023
North Tyneside	88
Eastbourne	99
Ipswich	103
Cardiff	108
Southend-on-Sea	109
Sheffield	112
Preston	114
Derby	116
Gloucester	123
Leeds	140
Lincoln	141
Southampton	143
Group average	116.3

Appendix 3 - Eastbourne CSP – Income & Expenditure 2022/23

Spend by project

Grant	2023/24 PCC Allocation	£48,544.19
Other income	Accruals / refunds 2022/23	£840.05
Other income		£0.00
Total income	Total income	£49,384.24
Bid	Organisation	£
EBC Regulatory Services / Sussex Police	Best Bar None	£2,500.00
Gildregde Park Light maintenance	Safer Streets	£331.48
Eastbourne Youth Radio	Eastbourne Education Business Partnership	£490.00
Southern Rail	Banner to support safety sessions	£91.94
ESCC	Contribution to Domestic Homicide Reviews	£2,313.20
Unity CIC	Nurture Projects - Eastbourne	£3,500.00
Seahaven FM	Ad campaign	£525.00
ESFRS	Cadet Equipment	£1,944.00
Audio Active	Beats & bars	£8,592.00
Sussex Police	Redoubt alley way	£6,300.00
Sussex Police	Speedwatch equipment	£1,059.72
Brighton Womens Centre	Emotional wellbeing support	£2,532.00
St Elisabeths Church	Youth club / worker support	£8,000.00
Bournethisway	Hate crime (homophobic) awareness campaign	£2,000.00
	Total spent	£40,179.34
	Remaining funds	£9,204.90
	Remaining accounting for pipeline	£9,204.90
	Total spent as a % budget	81%
	Total - inc pipeline as a % budget	81%

Pipeline bids 2023/24	EASTBOURNE	£Est
Warming Up the Homeless (WUTH)	Prison release housing support	£1,802.50
EBC	Youth club support	£4,932.00
Shinewater Youth Club	Equipment fund (subject to MH bid success)	£0.00
BCRP	Nightwatch Radios	£1,745.00
Eastbourne Borough Council	Private Sector Mediation Services - 5 referrals	£0.00
Total		FALSE

Spend by priority

