

Report to: Cabinet

Date: 23 March 2023

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

Report of: Tim Whelan, Director of Service Delivery

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

Ward(s): All.

Purpose of report: To enable Cabinet to consider the 2022/23 performance of the Eastbourne & Lewes Community Safety Partnership (E&LCSP).

Decision type: Non-key

Officer recommendation(s): That Cabinet note the achievements and activities of the Eastbourne & Lewes Community Safety Partnership in 2022/23.

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.
- 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 District and Eastbourne 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 been working on a joint basis for the past five years, 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 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 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 across the District. LJAG 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 issues such as domestic abuse, organised crime and county lines, at a strategic level.

2. Annual Plan 2022/23.

- 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 2022, 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 and 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 remain unchanged, as they remained well placed to tackle the District's current challenges. Some of the more targeted goals in the plan were updated to reflect the specific types of anti-social behaviour (ASB) that residents were most concerned about, and help address partners increasing concerns about online crime, fraud and harassment. The five priorities addressed by the Partnership in 2022/23 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. Outcomes and performance management.

- 3.1. An analysis of latest Sussex Police data shows that for the year to December 2022, 5,850 crimes were reported across Lewes District, a rise of 11.6 % when compared to the same point in time last year. This trend reflects increased activity across both the commercial and night-time economy, now that almost a year has passed since Covid-19 restrictions were fully lifted. This increase can be seen in recorded crime trends nationally.
- 3.2. Once other incidents are taken into account, such as those reports of anti-social behaviour (ASB), domestic abuse and hate, that are not classified as crimes, the increase (6.2%) is slightly lower. This is accounted for by a significant fall in the number of recorded ASB incidents, which dropped by 52%, (1,068 incidents). This trend reflects a fall from the high levels of ASB recorded during periods of lockdown, when figures reflected real time increases as a result of more neighbour disputes and youth driven ASB, as well as a significant number of lockdown breaches recorded under ASB categories.
- 3.3. The rising trend was reflected across the most commonly reported types of crime, including robbery, theft and vehicle offences, with levels of acquisitive crime \uparrow 17%. A significant increase in the recorded level of shoplifting (\uparrow 77%) may reflect the cost of living pressures. Levels of burglary bucked the rising trend. They fell during the pandemic and also fell year on year (\downarrow 33%) reflecting targeted work by local neighbourhood policing teams and the fact that many people are still working from home. Increases in public order offences (\uparrow 13%) and public place violent crime (\uparrow 17%), again reflected increasing activity in the night-time economy and alcohol related incidents. However, it is important to stress that the number of recorded incidents of knife crime (34) and serious violence (38) remain relatively low, though clearly they remain a key concern.
- 3.4. Levels of reported domestic abuse (crime & incidents) fell slightly (\downarrow 11.1%), although the number of overall reports remained high (1,379 incidents). This fall is likely to reflect a reduction from the higher levels of reports received during the pandemic. Levels of reported hate crime and incidents increased by a third, with the highest rises being recorded for reports motivated by religion (up \uparrow 200% - 15 reports) and gender (up \uparrow 164% - 29 reports). The most commonly reported incidents relate to sexuality (up \uparrow 10% - 40 reports) and race (up \uparrow 58%), which remains the highest reporting category (93 reports). Although numbers overall remain relatively low, these increases are a concern.
- 3.5. 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 2022) shows that, with a rate of 55 crimes per 1000 people, it is one of the two lowest. This level is well below the group average of 71 crimes per 1000 people.

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.

- 3.6. Road safety remains a key issue of concern across the District. In the eleven months of the year to November 2022 (latest available) a total of 59 people² were killed or seriously injured (KSI) on the District's roads. This is equivalent to the 60 people recorded as KSI in the first eleven months of 2021.
- 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 and achievements across these priorities are set out below.

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

- Continuing to work with multi-agency partners to deliver activities focussed on creating safe spaces for women and girls by reducing the risks present in and around the night-time economy. This work includes promoting initiatives funded by the Government's Safer Street programme, working in close collaboration with local police to support operations promoting engagement with licenced premises, raising awareness of drink spiking, and reducing the harms associated with drug and alcohol use.
- Administering the Joint Action Group (JAG), which meets monthly to discuss local crime and disorder issues, identify local hotspots of ASB, and agree solutions. Approved funding this year has supported local community engagement events, delivered bike marking schemes to help reduce theft, and purchased equipment for local youth groups.
- Working with Sussex Police to support *Operation Blitz*, the local initiative targeted at tackling anti-social behaviour across the District. 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 police, youth outreach services Neighbourhood and Homes First Council officers, to help tackle local issues.
- Supporting the Council's Neighbourhood and Environment First teams work to keep public spaces across the District clean, tidy, and free from rubbish. In the year to date (April to November) the teams dealt with over five hundred reports of fly-tipping, graffiti, rubbish, and abandoned vehicles. Ease of reporting is facilitated through the *report it* app, which all residents of the District 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.
- Funding the purchase of litter picking equipment to support up to ten community cleaning groups operating in parks, beaches, and open spaces across the District.

² Source: Data Portal, Sussex Road Safety Partnership

- Directly funding new youth projects and adventure play areas in Ringmer & Barcombe, creating safe meeting spaces for local young people. The new community assets projects provide welcome community assets provide new recreation facilities and help deter boredom and the associated risk of some young people engaging in anti-social behaviour.

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

- Participating 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 response / support services, and increase the availability of specialist accommodation in which to re-house victims. A separate stream of work, supported by the *Safer Streets* fund is delivering awareness campaigns, bystander training, and education programmes focussed on promoting healthy relationships to young people.
- Directly funding projects offering support through programmes delivering security adaptations to make victims able to stay in their existing home feel safer, and therapy rehabilitation programme targeted referrals from the local DA survivors network in Lewes.
- Supporting the Homes First team, who have employed a dedicated specialist advisor role to establish best practice across the housing management and housing needs teams, when responding to reports and supporting victims. The role achieve this by driving forward a programme of assessment against the Domestic Abuse Housing Alliance (DAHA) standard, a standard backed by the leading sector specialist organisation supporting housing providers in this field. Meanwhile, alongside other districts & boroughs, the team continue to provide homes for use as short-stay respite accommodation, catering for the urgent re-housing needs of domestic abuse 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 systems, processes and practices of the relevant agencies involved, to help reduce future risk. There are currently five reviews being considered by County's Safer Communities Board, which both Council Member and Officer representatives attend.

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

- Participating in the Violence Reduction Unit, a Sussex Police led task force, co-ordinating approaches to tackling serious violence across East Sussex. Work continues to focus on reducing the violence and sexual offences committed against women and girls, in particular addressing the anxiety they experience in and around the night-time economy. Related initiatives have focussed on creating safe spaces and delivering enhanced police patrol activity in key locations, at times of heightened risk.

- Preparing for the implementation of a new (statutory) *Serious Violence Duty*. This requires community safety partnerships to draw together local strategic needs assessments that identify patterns of serious violence and explore its causes. Once established, local action plans must be agreed and put in place before the end of January 2024. The Partnership is working with Sussex Police, the Safer East Sussex Team and other districts and boroughs to develop a response, which we anticipate will cover all of East Sussex.
- Supporting activities to reduce knife crime, which include Sussex Police's *Operation Safety*, that drives a range of local awareness and enforcement initiatives to help keep 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.
- Directly funding projects and programmes that actively engage those young people who are at greater risk of being drawn into more serious crime and ASB. This year, the Partnership has worked with ESCC's Youth Outreach Service to support programmes that extend the *Active Fishing* programme to a further eighty young people in the Havens, and allows the *Active Music* production workshops to open up new session in Lewes. A new programme, launching this spring will target educational coaching and life skills sessions at young people identified as at risk being drawn into serious crime who are struggling in mainstream school. It will benefit up to fifty young people.

Priority 4 - Address 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.
- 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. Over forty council officers received an update and briefing from the *Discovery* team in January. Raising awareness in this way helps disrupt the activities of organised crime groups who set out to exploit vulnerable persons, often forced to work in local restaurants, nail bars, and brothels across the Borough.

- Raising awareness of scams, most recently by addressing the current risks posed by organised criminals seeking to fraudulently exploit funds offering residents financial help with the cost of living. To help tackle this Council websites provide clear warnings and links to support organisations such as *Get Safe Online*, whilst the Partnership has funded a series of advertisements on *Seahaven FM* that promote the current help on offer, but caution residents to remain alert to fraud.
- Reducing the risk of vulnerable young people being exploited by criminals gangs, through the support provided to the ESCC sponsored activity schemes referenced above.

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

- Supporting an East Sussex Fire & Rescue Service led campaign by funding the production of road safety stickers alerting drivers to the dangers of the ‘fatal four’ road safety issues (not wearing seatbelts, mobile phone use, speeding and drink/drug driving). ESFRS are working with fleet companies to display these on 375 good vehicles in regular use on the County’s roads.
- This year the partnership has supported related initiatives sponsored by East Sussex Fire & Rescue Service, that set out to reduce the harm caused by road traffic collisions. The first, Biker Down, is an initiative targeted at raising awareness of how first response care should be administered to victims of motorcycle collisions, whilst the second has funded the purchase of resuscitation dummies, to support local first aid education sessions in schools and colleges.

3.7. A summary of the annual income and expenditure for Lewes District’s Partnership budget is set out in appendix 1. Over 90% of the allocated funds have been spent and an identified pipeline of projects is in place to utilise the remaining budget before year-end. Where possible advantage has been taken to draw on match funding to optimise the impact of the funding provided.

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 Lewes 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 issues. The next plan is due to be signed off by the Partnership in early Spring 2023.

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. *Head of Financial Planning consulted 23/02/2023.*

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: 22/02/23 - Legal ref: 011848-LDC-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. 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 any 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 2022/23.

13. Background papers.

13.1. The following background papers is associated with this report:

- Eastbourne & Lewes Community Safety Plan 2022/23.

Appendix 1 – Lewes Community Safety Partnership – Income & Expenditure 2022/23

Spend by project

Income	£ Amount
2022/23 Grant - Police & Crime Commissioner	£34,829.03
Other income - Accruals / refunds 2021/22	£3,454.63
Income - Total	£38,283.66
Project / funded programme	£ Paid / requisitioned
Nurture proj. supporting victims of DA / sexual abuse - Unity	£5,320.00
Play area refurbishment - Barcombe Parish Council	£5,000.00
C7 all route survey - The Safer C7 Project	£5,000.00
DHR - ESCC	£3,000.00
Engage Peacehaven - Engage Sussex	£2,000.00
DA support scheme - Change Grow Live	£2,000.00
Active Fishing - ESCC Youth Serv.	£1,950.00
Youth skills workshops - ESCC Youth Serv./ N-Gage/CRE8	£1,900.00
Active Minds - ESCC Youth Serv.	£1,855.00
Ringmer Youth Club - part 1 payment - Ringmer Youth Partnership	£1,700.00
Op Pictogram - ESFRS	£1,500.00
Fraud / cost of living ads - Seahaven FM	£978.75
Community Litter Picking kits - Environment Fist	£930.00
Bike marking - Cycle Lewes	£864.40
Bike marking - Cycle Havens	£588.00
Resuscitation manakins - ESFRS	£407.03
Expenditure - Total	£34,993.18
Balance (Credit)	(£3,290.48)

Spend by priority

